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Practicall DIVINITIE: OR, GOSPEL-LIGHT *Shining forth*

In ſeverall choyce SERMONS, On divers Texts of Scripture.

Viz.
1. *The Miſery of earthly thoughts*, on Iſa. 55.7.
2. *A Sermon of Self-denial*, on Luke 9.23.
3. *The efficacie of importunate Prayer in two Sermons* on Luke 11.9.
4. *The neceſſity of Goſpel obedience, in two Sermons* on Colloſſ. 1.10.
5. *A Caveat againſt late Repentance*, on Luke 23.24
6. *The Soveraign vertue of the Goſpel*, on Pſal. 147.3.
7. *A Funeral Sermon*, on Iſa. 57.1.
8. *The signs of God's forsaking people*. Jer. 14.9.

his last Sermon

Preached by that laborious and faithfull Meſſenger of Chriſt, WILLIAM FENNER, ſometimes Fellow of *Pembroke Hall* in *Cambridge*, and late *Miniſter* of *Rochford* in *Eſſex*.

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LONDON,
Printed by *T. R.* and *E. M.* for *John Stafford*, and are to be ſold in *Brides* Church-yard, Fleet-ſtreet, 1650.

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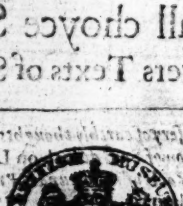
6. The Sovereign [illegible] of the Gospel, on Psal. 147. 3.
7. A Funeral Sermon, on Isa. 57. 1.



Preached by that laborious and faithfull Messenger of Christ, WILLIAM FENNER, some-times Fellow of Pembroke Hall in Cambridge, and late Minister of Rochford in Essex.

LONDON,
Printed by T. R. and E. M. for John Stafford, and are to be sold in Bride Church-yard, Fleet street, 1670.

To the Reader.

Courteous Reader,

THE Author of the Sermons now in thy hand, was known unto many, (and to my selfe in part) for a man of an absolute composition & temper to make a Minister of the Gospel, in respect of two soveraign ingredients, *light* and *heat*, eminencie of knowledge in the things of God, together with strength and fervencie of zeale for the managing of this knowledge to the best advantage for the glory of God. So that that crowne of honour which our Saviour himself set upon the head of *John* the Baptist, would very well, without any anoynting of flattery, have fitted his: *He was a burning and a shining light* (a). And though his sense and mine doe not walk together thorough every particular touch'd in the Sermons following, yet doe I judge the perusall of them, a worthy recompence for any mans

a John 5. 35

time and labour that shall be bestowed hereon.

The God of peace give us in his time union of judgements in the Truth: and in the mean time union of affections in that which is good. If we really and cordially love peace and not our own minds & wils, thorough a mistake instead of it, I am certain it is, that we will not suffer it to be taken from us by the hand of any difference in judgement whatsoever. I doe but keep thy heart and spirit from better company in the Sermons following by my Epistle. But that which hinders thee in this behalf, shall be immediately taken out of the way, after the speaking of this one word: Read, understand, and consider: and thy soul shall prosper, and the grace of God in Christ shall be thy portion.

Thine in the service of
Truth and Peace
JOHN GOODWIN.

Coleman-street
London. Feb. 5.
1646.

The Contents of the ſeverall Sermons contained in this Book.

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THE MISERY OF Earthly Thoughts.

ISA. 55. 7.

Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, &c.

I Have heretofore begun the Doctrine of the *Thoughts* of men; Now I deſire to finiſh it. Whence we had this Point: that

Thoſe whoſe minds run habitually on earthly things, are yet in the ſtate of miſery. Doctr.

Firſt, Becauſe a man is in the ſtate of miſery till he hath repented: Now, untill a man have forſaken his *old thoughts*, that man hath not repented. *Oh Jeruſalem, waſh*

thy heart, Jer. 4. 14. A man must not only rid himself of vain thoughts, but he must wash his heart clean, with this Emphasis, *That he may be saved*: No salvation without this. *How long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee?*

2. As a man is in the state of misery, till he have repented, so also till he is in Christ. Now when a man is led by his own vain *thoughts*, his *thoughts* being not sanctified; so long that man is not in Christ; if he were in Christ, Christ would sanctifie his *thoughts*. I, but may some man say, He hath wronged me, *ergo*, I will think thus and thus. Nay, but Christ casteth down the strong holds, and if thou wilt not yield, Christ will cast thee off; but if thou belong to Christ, he will cast all down before thee.

3. That man is in the state of misery, that doth not love God, that walks not with God in his thoughts. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. &c.* Mat. 22. 37. So I do, sayes one, and yet I think on my vanities too: And thus carnal men think they love God. But if thou love God with all thy heart, thou lovest him with all that is in thy heart; for what is a mans heart, but the purposes

purposes of his heart? Now if a man give not over vain purposes, he loves not God with all his heart.

4. That man that cannot forsake sinne, is in the state of misery, and can never enter into life, (see the Text) *the wicked must forsake his wayes.* A man must deny his own words, and speak according to Gods own warrant: the *actions* of mens lives are the wayes of their *thoughts*; the Tongue must not only *forsake his way*, but the Heart his way also, else a man is a wicked man, *Prov.*23.26. He is wicked whose *thoughts* are not sanctified. But what will men say? shal we be condemned for a *thought?* words are small sins, and *thoughts* are lesse: Must a man then so strictly look to his *thoughts?* I will make it plain, that for a man to be vain-thoughted, is a grievous sin.

1. Because if the sin of vain thoughts be pardoned, it will ask *abundance of mercy.* Mark the Text, *Abundantly pardon*: No repentance, no mercy, without abundance; *ergo*, it is not so small as the world takes it to be.

2. Thoughts are the *sins of the highest part of a man*; for they are the sins of the heart; and surely the sins of the chiefest

part are greater then any other. A King counts it not much for a Rogue to steale by the wayes side, but for a Knight or a Nobleman it is a foul matter: So the Lord would not have the *lordly part* to sin against him; He would not have the *tongue*, much lesse the *heart*, that is the Kingly part of a man, to transgresse. And this is the reason why *Deborah* calls them *great thoughts of heart*, *Judg.* 5.15. Sins in thought, are great sins: the Heart is the lady, the mistresse, or highest part of a man; and He that hath made us, looks that we should serve him with the the Master-part; That must be afforded him.

3. Because *thoughts* are breaches of every *Commandement*; Other sins are but against one, but all the Commandements condemn vain thoughts. The first Commandement saith, *Thou shalt have no other Gods but me*; But thou settest an Image up in thy heart, when thou thinkest of thy pleasures, &c. So, *Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath day*: Now if thou think thine own thoughts that day, thou breakest this commandement, and so of all the rest: The sin of *thought* is therefore a haynous sin.

4. Because they are the strength of a mans

mans heart and ſoule, the firſt-born of original corruption. A man by nature is a child of wrath, a ſoul and a body of death. Now what doth the heart firſt break out in? It firſt ſhewes it ſelfe in its thoughts; and if it be the firſt-borne, it muſt needs be the ſtrength thereof. *Jacob* ſaid to *Reuben* his firſt-born, he was his *ſtrength*; and therefore all Lordſhip lies in the heart; A man may more eaſily part with all other ſins then with this, becauſe the heart of the heart runs this way; the heart will part with any ſin, rather then with his pernicious *thoughts*.

5. Becauſe they are the *deareſt acts of men*. We count a man preferred, when he is preferred to the *thoughts* of a man, Gen 40.14. *Think on me*, ſaith *Joſeph* to *Pharaohs* Butler: I count it thanks enough, if thou preferre me to thy *thoughts*. We prize that moſt, which we think moſt on; That which a man ſcorns, he ſcorns to beſtow his *thoughts* on; but that which a man ſets his heart on, that is his dearling. Now that any thing ſhould be dear to a man, ſave God, this is a horrible ſin; when a man makes his Dogs his dearling, his Whore his dearling, &c. For look what thou moſt thinkeſt on, that is thy dearling: Why? Becauſe thou

dandleſt it in thy heart; therefore it is a horrible ſin for a man not to ſet his heart upon God.

Obj. But can a man live without *thoughts?* doth Grace call us to leave *thinking?* then a man muſt ceaſe to be.

Anſ. *Non tollit, ſed attollit naturam*; it takes them not away, but it takes them up. He doth not ſay, Let the wicked forſake *thoughts*, but *his thoughts*; let him ſet them on other matters. When God cals men unto him, he is ſo far from taking away mens thoughts, as that he will rather increaſe them. If thou be a new creature, thou muſt have more *thoughts*; Thou art full of *thoughts* now; but then thou wilt be fuller. *Pſal.* 119, 59. When *David* turned to God, his heart *thought upon his wayes*; the word in the original is, *He thought on his wayes on both ſides.* The curious work of the Sanctuary was wrought on both ſides; Common works are wrought only on one ſide, but on the other ſide are full of ends and ſhreds. So the Prophet looks on *his way* on both ſides; he ſtrives to walk curiouſly, preciſely, and accurately to turn himſelf to Gods teſtimonies. *Ergo*, God cals not to forſake *thoughts*, but *our thoughts*;

thoughts; it is a hard duty for men to forsake their own *thoughts*. I will make it appeat thus:

First, Because it is a hard thing to *reform ones self*; one thing may reform another; but here is the difficulty, for a thing to reform it self: it is an easie matter for a mans *heart* to reform his *tongue*, but it is hard for the heart to reform it self; in correcting its own *thoughts*: it is hard for a man to deny himself. A hell-hound may reform his tongue; but here is the difficulty, for his heart to reform it self, for *thoughts* are the heart, *Phil.* 3. 19. *who mind earthly things*; thoughts of earthly things are called the mind; a mans *thoughts* and his *mind* are all one, so that if it reform *thoughts* it must reform it self.

2. It is hard to reform *thoughts*, because they are *partial acts*; if they were full acts, a man might reform them, rather then being partial acts: my reason is, because they are in every action he doth; *thoughts* run on all mens actions; if *thoughts* were alone, men might mend them: but they busie themselves about all actions; if a man pray, *thoughts* run along with him in prayer, nay men pray with twisted *thoughts*,

so that before he comes to an end of his prayer, he shall have abundance of glancings on other things. See it in old *Eli*, 1 *Sam.* 1. *Hanna* was praying; Old *Eli*, saith the Text, *thought she had been drunken*. Either he was, or should have been praying also; yet you see he had wandring *thoughts* to mark the lips of his neighbours. So, as *John* was preaching, *Mat.* 3. there came a *thought* into his hearers hearts, that *they were the seed of Abraham*. What did make them think so? *John* spake of no such matter, but he said, *Every tree that brings not forth good fruit, &c.* They had, it seems, by-thoughts in the duty of hearing: therefore seeing *thoughts* do thus *twist* themselves about mens actions, hence it is that they are so hard to be rooted out.

3. It is hard for men to forsake their own *thoughts*, because they are in mens hearts, *Their inward thoughts*, Psal. 49. 11. Every man hath two kinde of *thoughts*, *inward*, and *outward*; *explicite*, and *implicite*; implicite thoughts are those that never shew themselves in the heart, but at some desperate attempt; Explicite, are those which are in the heart every day: as in *Psal.* 49, 11. *They think their Houses*

shall

shall continue for ever. Would you think that men should have such *thoughts*: their *outward thoughts* were, they were mortal; *We see* (saith the Text) *that men die, &c.* and yet they think inwardly *this they shall live for ever.* Now according to these *inward thoughts* men act; and hence it is that men neglect repentance, and other holy duties, as if God would never call them to an account; they have not these thoughts above-board, but they are *inward*, and these spoile the heart, and these are the causes why men cannot forsake their own *thoughts*. *Epiphanius* speaks of a fig-tree which grew in a wall, &c. Bad thoughts will be alwayes seizing on a man till he dies, and then *all his thoughts perish.* But so long as a man is alive in *old Adam*, *these thoughts* are rooted in the bottom of the soul, which hinder good duties, and this is the cause why vanity of mind sprouts up.

Use. *Examine your selves then*, for it is one of the best wayes for a man to try his estate by, even to examine his *thoughts*. If a man would see whether the sea be salt, he need not drink all the water that is in it; one drop will serve his turn. So a man may see whether he be a child of God, or of the

Devil,

Devil, even by his *thoughts*. I will make it appear by these Reasons:

First, because *mens thoughts are the free acts of their hearts*. Many times you speak not as you would, you do not as you would, but a man *thinks* always as he will. Favour of Great men, and desire to please them, makes men doe many times what they would not; but *thoughts are free*. I may say so, and so, but I will think what I list: *Ergo*, if thou wilt *judge* a man, judge him by that he does *freely*, and not by that which he does by compulsion. But now thy *thoughts* are *free*, they are thine *own* act; nothing can *force* thy *thoughts* but thy self: *ergo*, in them thy heart shews it self whether it be carnal or spiritual.

When *Peter* denied his Master, could a man have judged him by *that*, then he might have judged him an Apostata: but that was his *passion*; he discovered what his *fear* was, not what his *heart* was; For if a man might have but looked into *Peters* heart, (though it was a fearfull sin, and without Gods mercy might have damned him) Yet there you might have heard him say, *Oh it is my Master! Oh that I had never come hither! It is my Master and Saviour,*

I have none but he. It was for feare of his life, that he denied him: For, *Prov.* 23. 7. *As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.* A covetous Usurer may make a rich feast, and say with his tongue, Sir, you are welcome; he must give good words, the shame of the world and speech of people will make him do it; yet his *thoughts* it may be are not towards thee. So try thy self, how go thy *thoughts* at home or abroad? Are thy *thoughts* on heaven or heavenly things, or are they below? Sure I am, if a mans *thoughts* were on heavenly things, then his heart would be there also; for *as a man thinks, so is he*, Prov. 23. 7.

2. As they are the freest acts, so they are the *immediate acts* of the heart. Can a man judge of the fountain by the water that runs seven miles off, as well as by that which runs immediately from it? The water seven miles off, may have tincture from the soyle, and so it may be bad there, though good at the fountains head; *ergo*, judge of the fountain by the water which comes immediately from it. Now, *thoughts* come immediately from the heart, nothing is between them and the heart, and *out of the heart* (saith our Saviour) *proceed evil thoughts*,

thoughts, &c. Mark 7. 21. Other sinnes come from the heart too, but it is at the second, third, or fourth hand; abundance of *circumstances* come between them and the act; as in the act of murder, it may be there were base words offered, yea and blows too, &c. but *thoughts* come immediately from the heart: *Ergo*, if thy *thoughts* be proud, carnal, &c. so art thou; if thy *thoughts* carry thee away in the cares of this life, so is thy heart, &c.

3. *Thoughts*, they are the *continued acts* of the heart, a man is alwayes doing them. Can a man judge of an Usurer, and say he is liberal, because he makes *one* great feast unto his neighbours? No; but he may say it is a *Usurers feast*, a great feast.

By what a man doth *alwayes*, by that judge him: Thou art not alwayes *praying*, &c. or in good company; but thou art *alwayes* thinking good or evil thoughts: thy thoughts are *continued* acts of thy heart. Can a man judge a horse for stumbling once in a long journey? At such a place he went well, and at such a time, and alwayes; yet perhaps once in a year he may stumble: Can you, or will you judge him by that? No, rather judge him by that which

which he is alwayes doing. Thou art alwayes *thinking*; now that is thy *God* which thou art *alwayes* thinking on: If on riches, then that is thy god; or whatsoever it be, then that is thy god.

Examine then thy heart by thy *thoughts*; for out of the abundance of thy heart thy mouth speaketh: yea, for one *word*, there is abundance of *thoughts*; for one good duty, there is abundance of thoughts; *ergo* if thou wilt examine thy *heart*, examine thy *thoughts*.

4. Thoughts are the *Univocal acts* of the heart, such as wherein the heart shews its own nature. As for example: the Univocal act of Light is, to lighten the room: but now you cannot judge of the Light by the *heat*, so well as you may by the *shining*. So an ill savour must be judged of by the stinking, which is the univocal act of it: It causeth abundance of other effects, but this is the proper act whereby it shews it self. So the *thoughts* of men are the univocal acts of their hearts, therefore in Scripture called the *way of the heart*: just as the heart is, so are the thoughts: if the heart be proud, so are the thoughts: just according to the nature of the heart, so are the thoughts. 5. They

5. They are the *swifteſt acts* of the heart; If I judge of a *ſcholar*, I will judge him by that which he doth *ex tempore*: if a fool ſtudy, he may ſpeak to purpoſe; but look what a man doth by his own inclination, that a man diſcovers himſelf to be; Thoughts are the *extempore* acts of the heart; if thy heart be heavenly, it will ſcatter out heavenly meditations; if carnal, then thy thoughts are carnal: *thoughts* are as the viſions in the night, *ergo* we uſe this proverb, *his thoughts are gone a ſutering*. If then they be the ſwifteſt acts of mens hearts, then are they moſt fit to expreſſe the nature of the heart.

6. Thoughts are the *peculiar acts* of the heart, peculiar to God only: the world may ſee what thy *outward* life is, but thy *thoughts* God only ſees; neither Angel, Devil, nor Man can ſee them: and as they are *peculiar* to Gods eye, ſo he moſt regards what mens *thoughts* are; and therefore the beſt way for a man to *judge* himſelf, is, to judge himſelf that way which God doth, even *by his thoughts*. The *Lord knowes the thoughts of man*, Pſal. 94. 11. Examine your ſelves in this then, concerning your *thoughts*, whether they be metamorphoſed

or

or no: A man may ſay, he hath good thoughts of God; but let him examine himſelf whether it be ſo or no.

7. Thoughts are the *conſcionat acts* of the heart; they are the greateſt accuſers, or excuſers of the heart: they are Conſciences Noſe, as we may ſo ſpeak: True it is, the words of the tongue, and the actions of the hands, are all in the light and ſight of the conſcience; but the neerer a thing is unto the conſcience, the more able it is to judge of the conſcience: And therefore Saint *Paul* puts the *accuſing*, or *excuſing*, eſpecially on the thoughts, *Rom.* 2. 15.

We grant, a wicked man may have good thoughts, but they are thoughts *deſcending*, not *aſcending*; they are caſt into the heart by God, not raiſed out of the heart. *Moſes thought in his heart to viſit his brethren*, Acts 7. *ver.* 23. Good thoughts *grow* out of the heart of the godly, they come from the bottome of it: a wicked man may have good thoughts *caſt* into his minde, but he will fling them out again.

Secondly, we grant wicked men may have good thoughts; but examine whether they be *cloſe with the heart* or no; all the

proper

proper thoughts of a man are the possessions of the heart, *Job* 17.11. They take hold of the heart, and they are at home in the heart. Here then examine thy heart, whether the thoughts of God *close* with thy heart: Doth repentance *close* with thy heart? dost thou think of death, and do the thoughts thereof make thee die daily? Or dost thou think of death, & dost thou not love to be holden with that thought? Dost thou think of hell, and wilt thou not be holden with that thought of hell, but thy thoughts are on thy pleasures? So then, if thy thoughts close not with thy heart, it is nothing to the purpose.

Thirdly, there may be good thoughts in thy heart, but tis questionable whether good thoughts, or no; if they come out of *due season*, it is nothing to the purpose: If a Printer print never so well, and make never so good letters; yet if he place one word where another should stand, he marrs all: So, good thoughts, if they be *seasonable*, and in their proper place, they are the effects of the *Spirit*; but if *out of season*, they may be the *thoughts* of Reprobates: As if thou be at Prayer, and then to be thinking of a Sermon, is nothing to the purpose. They must

must be seasonable, and bring forth fruit in due season, *Psal.* 1. 3. When thou art at prayer, thou must have thy thoughts suitable to prayer, for if thy thoughts be never so good, yet if they be not *seasonable* and *suitable* to the action thou hast in hand, they are not actions of grace, grace cannot away with them.

Fourthly, thou hast good thoughts in thy heart, but the question is *whether they be counselled thoughts, such as thou hast determined to think on.* Thoughts are called the counsels of a mans heart, *1 Cor. 4.* it may be thou maiest stumble on a good thought now and then, it may be when thou art swearing, thou wilt say God forgive me, when thou hast been drinking all the day, it may be a good thought steps in and cries God mercy, but thou goest not to *schoole* to learne the *arte* of meditation, or the science of holy thinking, or to say with *David, O God my heart* is fixed.

Now if that sin in thought be so great a sin, this should teach us what a horrible sinne it is to sin in deed, therfore thoughts are the smallest sins, and the Psalmist makes it an argument of Gods quick-sighted power to see

thoughts, *thou seest my thoughts afarre off*; you will say that man is quick sighted that can see a pins head a 100 myles off: even so God sees thoughts, if a *pins* point can stab a man, then a *sword* can much more. Now if *thoughts* be so haynous and capitall a sin, how fearfull a sin is it to commit sinne in deed? for thee to sweare, to lye, to commit adultery, to keepe wicked company, to mocke at Gods people, to live in covetousnesse, &c. this is to commit in deed; if *small* sins be so damnable, what then are the *greatest*? If the cockatrice in the *egge* be such poyson, what will it be when it is *hatcht*? sins in *thought* are imperfect, but outward actions are perfect.

Tis a wicked distinction to say that *some* sins are *Contra legem* or *Præter legem*; for, *all* sins are against the Law, as Saint *James* saith, *when lust is conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished it bringeth forth death*; thou that art a drunkard, thy sin is *finished*; thou art a true sinner *in deed*, if thou livest in the *execution* of *any outward* sin.

Againe, sins in thought are *simple* sins; but sins in deed are *compounded*, sin in thought is part of sin, but when it is in deed,

deed it may be the cauſe of a 1000 ſins: for a man to think too much of his bellie is a ſin, but for a man to be *drunken*, this is *abundance* of ſins; for it is an abuſe of Gods creatures, a ſpending of his ſubſtance, a weakning of his parts, a ſcandall to others, &c. Sin in deed is a ſin with an *addition*; ſin in deed is an *impudent* ſin; ſee *Eſay* 65. 2, 3. &c. that man is impudent with a witnes that will commit ſin in deed, for he is neither aſhamed of Gods nor mans preſence, if any man be a deſperate ſiner, this is he.

But it may be objected, *how then can thoughts be ſaid to be ſuch ſins, even ſins of the higheſt part of a man?* *Object.*

I anſwer, a Theife or Rogue hath burnt a mans dwelling houſe, yet he may proceed further and burn his ſtable too; a 1000 pound and a ſhilling are more then a 1000 pound; *ſins in thought are included within ſins in deed.* The *ſoule part* of ſin is the greateſt part of ſin; Now thoughts are the ſoule part of ſin; yet ſins in deed muſt needs be worſe in regard of the *progreſſe* of ſin, and alſo becauſe thoughts are *included* in them; thoughts and deeds, are more then thoughts alone. *Sol.*

I exhort and desire you therefore to *consider*.

First, *what great reason you have to set your thoughts on God.* God himself inericed this dutie at your hands, God hath taken a number of thoughts for us. *Innumerable are thy thoughts O God to us ward.* Psl. 40. 5. the Lord thinks on us from the Cradle to the Crosse; If the Lord should have intermitted his thought of thee, thou couldst not subsist; when thou wast up, the Lord thought how to feede thee; when thou wast in bed, he thought how to preserve thee; he doth not use to think of thee at one time and not at another, but he thinks on thee when thou art sick, and when thou art in health, asleep or awake; the Devill else would seize on thee. *I am poore and needy, yet the Lord thinks on me,* saith the Psalmist, Psal. 40. 17. And *Nehemiah* saith, *O Lord think on me;* shall wee call to God to think on us? then surely it is our duty to thinke on him, yea and he may call to us for that duty.

Secondly, *consider with your selves what thoughts they are which God calls for;* my son, saith he, give me thy heart. *Prov.* 23. 26

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He would faine have thy heart, he lets thee labour with thy hands for thy living, and he lets thee have thy feet to walk and the rest of thy members for thy severall uses, but the Lord requires thy *heart*, and therfore give him the thoughts of thy heart; for if thy neighbour comes to thee for fire, thou canst not give him fire, if thou take away the *heat* thereof; so give the Lord thy heart, and the thoughts of it will follow.

The Devill calls for thy heart also; *ergo* reason as *Ioseph* did when he was tempted, *how can I doe this and sin against my God? my Master hath delivered into my hands all that he hath, thee only excepted, and shall I take thee? how can I doe this?* So the Lord hath with-holden nothing from thee, but thy heart; *my sonne* (saith he) *give me thy heart*, yet wilt thou deny it him with the thoughts thereof.

Tell me you that are rich, would it be any *disparagement* unto you to be Gods servants, to set your thoughts on God? True it is the greater ill men of this world thinke it some disparagement to thinke on these things. But I tell thee thou that art a *Gentleman*, if thou have *grace*, it makes thee

more then a Gentleman; grace takes not away mens honor and riches, but if he be a *Knight*, it makes him more then a Knight; And as *Paul* said to *Philemon*, receive him now a servant and more then a servant; hee was a servant when hee was *carnall*, but now beeing a *Christian* he is more then a servant; if you have grace, it is an *addition* to your riches; *riches and more then riches*; ergo give your hearts to God, and it will be the better for you.

Thirdly, *the Lord hath made thy thoughts thy Jewels*, thy thoughts are precious, the Lord keepeth them under lock and key, hee will not let any see them; if all men should observe a man and look into him, yet they cannot see his *thoughts*; no; God hath lockt them up and made them thy *Jewels*; wilt thou then cast them into the myre? wilt thou preferre Haukes and Hounds in thy thoughts before God? canst thou sit at dinner and not once thinke of God, but alwayes on base pelfe? why thy thoughts are thy Jewels.

Againe, A man that is wise, will be wary what *companions* he keeps: your thoughts are your *only* companions; you never go out nor in, but your *thoughts* go along with you

you: and for this cauſe *Solomon* would have us place the word of God in our thoughts, *Pro.* 6. 22. See *Pſal.* 139. 15 16. *when I am awake I am preſent with thee.*

Men will be carefull what meat they eate, becauſe ſuch meat as they eate ſuch is their blood; and as their blood is, ſo is their body; now as the body feeds on *meat*, ſo doth the ſoul on *thoughts*; if we look not to our *thoughts*, they will be ſubject to abundance of corruptions; a man muſt give an account of *every idle word he ſpeakes*, and thoughts are the *intrinſecall* words of the heart: now if men muſt give an account of every idle word, then of every idle thought alſo.

Let this then teach all and every one of us in the feare of God to conſider our thoughts, elſe our end wil be deſtruction.

A SERMON OF SELF-DENIAL.

LUKE 9. 23.

And he said unto them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his crosse daily, and follow me.

THis Text contains the *first action* performed of every Christian, viz. *to deny himself*, concerning which you may here see,

First the *grounds* of it.

Secondly the *reasons* of it.

Thirdly

Thirdly, the *occasion* of it.
Fourthly, the *parts* of it.
Fifthly and lastly, the necessity of it.

I intend to handle these words as they are in relation to the context.

First, *the grounds* of this truth, *viz.* that *every man must deny himself.* And it is here expressed to be twofold, *viz.* the contrariety that is between *Christ* and *a mans selfe, mee*, and *himself*, these two termes are contradictorie one to the other; *if any man will come after me, let him deny himself*; these two cannot stand together.

Secondly, The contrariety that is between self and self; if a man be in Christ he hath two selves; he hath a *self in himself*, and *a self out of himself*; the self in himself is *old Adam*; the other in Christ, which is the new *man*; there is self-denying and self-denyed; if a man will *find* himself, he must *lose* himself. *Paul* must not be found in *Paul* having his *own righteousnesse*, but he must find himself *in Christ*, for, *salvation belongeth unto the Lord.* Psal. 3. 8. And *ergo* let him deny himself.

Secondly, you may see the *reason of it*, which is *threefold.*

First,

First, Christs own example verse 22. the son of man must suffer, must be rejected, Christ himself denyes himself, he might have commanded himselfe, hee might have demanded credit, honor, or riches, &c. he might have done thus; yet though he had no wicked self, but good self, yet he denyed *himself*; and therfore if we will goe after Christ, we must do to.

Secondly, *here is Christs merit*, he hath merited this dutie; Christ did not humble himselfe *for himselfe*, but he did it *for us*, and therefore we may well deny our selves for him; This is included in this word *And*. And if I have done this for you, I would have you doe the like for mee.

Thirdly, *here is Christs command too*, let him deny himself; Christ enjoynes this to all that will come after him, *let him deny himself*.

Now fellows the occasion, and that is threefold.

First, *Peters offence*; when Christ had told *Peter* and the rest of his Apostles how that he must suffer; *Peter* was offended saying, *Master, favour thy selfe*; even like a servant that out of love to himselfe would

would be loth his Master should be troubled, because then he thinkes himselfe shall be troubled also; oh saith Christ, art thou offended at this? I tell thee, neither thou nor any other can come after mee unlesse you deny your selves. *If any man will come after me, &c.*

Secondly, *as Peter was offended, so also were the rest of the Apostles.* They were very sorrie, *Mat.* 17. 22. they thought to have gotten credit in the world, and riches and worldly preferment, and now it grieved them to heare that they must have a suffering kinde of trade of it; *ergo* Christ said not only to *Peter*, but to them all, *if any man, &c.*

Thirdly, *like as his Apostles, so likewise he did foresee that all the world will be offended at this*; for many would faine have Christ and their selfe will too; but Christ gives a watch-word before-hand, *if any man will, &c.*

Fourthly, *the parts of it.* The whole duties is this, *Let him deny himselfe.* *Chrysostome* on the text saith, not onely deny himselfe, but in the originall *deny away himselfe*; not onely deny credit, &c. but abhorre it, if it cannot be had but with the

losse

losse of Christ we must not only barely deny selfe respects, but *abhorre* them and trample them under our feet.

The parts of this duty are two.

First, let him take up his crosse.

Secondly, let him deny himselfe and follow thee.

The first is opposed to *Selfe-favouring*, the second to *Selfe-doing*.

First, *let him take up his crosse*, let him not favour himselfe, thee must be content to part with selfe-means and maintenance, and selfe ends too; he must be content to part with all these; *hee that will come after me*, must lose many good friends, and many a good bit and sweet morsell to the flesh; *he that will come after me*, must not stand upon these termes; suppose a crosse of disgrace, come, *take it up* and weare it as thy crowne, nay thou must be willing to take a crosse before it is offered, and when thou hast it, thou must be willing to bear it.

Secondly, *he must follow me to*; ones selfe will doe as ones selfe would have him; that is true; but you must *follow me*, not your selfes; looke to *me*, and frame your selves to walk in my steps, *take up my crosse*, &c.

Lastly,

Lastly, here is the *necessity of it.* It is absolute true a man may go to hell if he be so minded, he may follow himself to hell, but if a man tender his salvation, then here is an *hypothetical* necessity, a necessity with an if.

First, if he mean to *come after me*, hee must take up his crosse and deny himselfe.

Secondly, if a man would *save* his life, he must *lose* it: if hee will *lose* it, he shall *save* it. If a man will keep his old relation, he may; but if he will find credit and life in *heaven*, hee must deny all *selfe-respects*.

Thirdly, if a man will gaine himselfe, let him deny himself. But what say some, how shall we live then? how then shall I hold up my head? These men would faine have the gaine of the world, but what is a man profited, if he win the world and lose his soule? &c. verse 25. If you stand upon these termes, if you can *buckle* a commandement for selfe respects, you may lose your soules; but if you will save your soules, thus you must doe. Again the text saith, if a man be ashamed of me and of my word, of him shall the son of man be ashamed, *ergo* if ever you looke that the son of man should not be ashamed of you, *deny* your selves. Now

Now for the Exposition.

Deny himself, there is the difficulty. A man cannot deny himself, 2 *Tim.* 2. 13. for *affirmare & negare* are contradictions, *ergo* somewhat must be meant by *ones self*: yet by ones self is not meant the Devill, as *Micarius* would have it, for since man hath sinned, saith he, the Devill is got into him, and is as neer unto him as himself, he is another self within his own self, another heart within his own heart: *ergo*, if he will come after Christ, he must forsake the Devill, though this be true, yet this is not the meaning of the text.

But first, a mans *corrupt will, wit, reason*, and all a mans corrupt self must be put off. *Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, &c.* Ephes. 4. 22. which is a mans self. *Viz.* thou must lay aside the man that thou art, thou must not be the same man if thou wilt follow Christ, thou must be a new self in Christ.

2. Here is not only meant a mans corrupt will, wit, reason, and affections, but also *all mens lusts and corruptions*, all sinnes that cleave so close as if they were himself, as fornication, uncleanesse, evill concupiscence, &c. *mortifie therefore your earthly*

lie members, Colos. 3. 5. the Apostle accounts a mans lusts as close to him as his *members*, for untill a man be brought home to Christ, he and his sins are *all one*, he must *deny himself*, viz. all his lusts.

Thirdly, By *selfe* is not onely meant a mans corrupt selfe as sinne and iniquity: but also a *mans good selfe in some respects*, not only sins, but also *Father, Mother, Children, Friends, &c.* yea, *life it selfe*, all if they be hinderances to him from Christ, *so farre* he must deny all these, *nay grace* it selfe; for a man may make a God of grace, or of prayer, &c. a man I say must *deny* all these so farre as they are stumblings and offences in his way to hinder him from Christ.

But oh sayes one, my father will disinherit me, I must humour him, he cannot endure a Puritan; If I must live as you would have me, I shall never have foot of his land; so the servant saies, I have a prophane master and he will turne me out of doors if I be so precise; yea but what sayes Christ? *if you will come after me*, you must deny *Father and Mother and all*; better it were that thy Father disinherit thee then that Christ should reject thee; therefore

therefore you must *deny all*, and *take up his crosse* and make it thine owne.

And so I come to the words, *Let him deny himselfe.* It is necessary to shew what *self-seeking* is, before you understand what *self-denyall* is.

By self-seeking, I mean a man that hath a *head lust* whereby he is self-conceited of himselfe.

There are five things in *self-seeking*.

For first, *self* is a head lust.
Secondly, it's a lust of *self-conceit*.
Thirdly, of *self-will*.
Fourthly, of *self-wit*.
Fifthly, of *self-confidence*.

1. *Self* is a *head lust*, it is the main lust that keeps men from coming unto Christ; all seek their own, not that which is Jesus Christ, *Philip.* 2. 21. What is the reason? Why, because they seek *self*, they follow their owne thoughts; and because they are ruled by their own selves, therefore they are not not ruled by Christ.

That it is a head lust, I prove it by five arguments.

1. Because it is the *leading lust to all*

lusts; no lust in the world but *selfe* leads the dance; why is man *proud*, but because *selfe* would get credit? Why is a man *covetous*, but because *selfe* would have means and maintenance; Why is a man *revengefull*, but because *selfe* will not put up wrongs? Christ bids us of all lusts to take heed of *self*, *Luke* 21. 34. Christ knowing what a deceitfull thing *selfe* is, he bids us have a care of self-beguilding; *Take heed to your selves* (saith he) for if you do not, *self* will bring you into many noysome lusts, as *surfetting*, and *drunkennesse*, and the *cares of this life*, &c. and so that day will come upon us unawars.

2. *Selfe* is the cause of all other lusts of the heart; it is the plotter and the ruler of all, it is the master of Arts; it was *selfe* that found out all lusts. *Selfe* found out pride, security and covetousnesse, and all other noysome lusts; *self* is loth to take the panies that God would have it, and therefore *selfe* sets his wits on the tainters, and hence it is that *Solomon* saith *God made man upright, but he* (viz selfe) *hath found many inventions*, Eccles. 7. 21. Man was upright, and God was the cause; He became wicked, how? why, *selfe* found out many

many inventions. *Selfe* is the inventer of all, and when *selfe* cannot get meanes enough by that way which God hath allowed, then *selfe* seekes out for credit, wealth, pleasure, &c. then it deviſes wayes of it ſelfe to get reputation, ſo that *ſelfe* is the cauſe of luſt.

3. *Selfe is an inluſt*, it runnes along through all the luſts of the fleſh, there is in *every* luſt of the fleſh an ounce of *ſelfe*. There would be no ſecurity in man but that *ſelfe* would faine live at eaſe. So that as *David* ſaid unto the woman of *Tekoah*, *hath not* Joab *a hand in all this?* ſo may I ſay, hath not *ſelfe* a hand in all this? *Aquinas* ſaith it is called *ſelfe* out of an inordinate love that a man bears to himſelf and to thoſe things which ſeem good to a mans ſelfe: A man hath not onely luſt to *pride*, *pleaſure*, &c. but a man looks alſo to things for *ſelfe*, either for ſome profit for *ſelfe*, or credit for *ſelfe*; *ſelfe* is alwayes an inluſt. See it in the wicked Steward, *Luke* 16. he ſaid within himſelfe, &c. hee was to be *turned out of his ſtewardſhip*. Now, what did he? he ſaid to himſelfe, or within himſelfe; what ſaid he? why, he ſaid *to begge he was aſhamed*, and *dig hee*

could not; *Selfe* was too lazie to work, and too proud to beg, and so he brought his masters two hundred pounds to fifty; and what was his reason for it? why, saith he, *that they may receive me into their houses*, *verse* 2. &c. and it is said, *the Lord commended the unjust Steward*, not as if he had commended the *sinne*, but as if he should say, I commend his *wit*.

4. *It is a make-lust*; a man would never break out into lust if it were not for *Selfe*. *Doeg* had a lust of *confidence* in his riches, *Psal.* 52. 7. and this made *Esau comfort* himselfe against *Jacob*; hee had a murthering lust to comfort himself, *Gen.* 27. 42. The Jewes had a lust of *formality* to pray, to hear, to bring offerings, to observe all the new Moones, and Ordinances of God, yet they had no delight in these things; no, their mind was on their imaginations, they loathed the word of God; why then would they do this? why *Selfe* was the cause, and they thought thereby to stay themselves upon God, *Esay* 48. 2. And for this cause many amongst us come to *Church*; this is a damnable lust.

Haman would not have vaunted of being

ing invited to the *Queenes banquet*, but that the Queene invited none but *himſelfe* with the *King*; he would not have beene ſo willing to anſwer to *Ahaſhueroths* queſtion, but for *himſelfe*; whom doth the King delight to *honour* more then *my ſelfe* thought he; *ſelfe* makes a man covetous, injurious, and full of wrongs, &c.

5. As it is a make luſt, ſo it is a *requeſting luſt*; Other luſts are with ſome men out of date, many reprobates cannot abide drunkenneſſe, nor pride, nor uſury; theſe ſinnes are out of date; why, doth not a man love a niggard? why, becauſe *ſelfe* is not the better for him; he cannot get ſo much as a *dinner* by him; many other ſinnes may be out of date alſo with men: but *ſelfe* is never out of date, it is alwayes in *requeſt*, and ſo long as men do well unto themſelves they ſhall be praiſed, ſaith the Pſalmiſt. *Pſal.* 49. 18. he hath none to make much of himſelfe but himſelfe. *Every man for himſelfe and God for us all*, ſaith *ſelfe*. But ſometime *ſelfe* is out of love; but how? why hee will do no good but unto himſelfe; this men cannot abide; this they ſay is *ſelfe* out of his wits; but *ſelfe* with the wiſ-

dome of the *flesh* is alwayes in request, *viz.* when men will be kind to others that they may be kind to them againe; this *selfe* the world loves alike.

2. Now I come to the second, which is *self-conceit*; self-seeking supposeth selfe conceitednesse. There is a bird called S. a faire bird, in French it is called the Devils bird, it is a black-bird, and yet it is conceited with it self that it is faire. By *S.* I meane first the *conceit a man hath of himselfe*. What shall I (saith *Selfe*) be disgraced by one that goes to plough and to cart, and shall I put it up? No, I am a Gentleman, &c. Another saith I am such and such a Scholar, and shall I be contented with such a poor living? these men will beare no reproofe, *they will move of my counsell*, *Prov.* 1. 30. and *therefore they shall eate of the fruit of their own way*, &c. verse 31.

Secondly, when *a man is conceited of himselfe and of his owne gifts*, as commonly women are of their beauty, and scholars of their learning. A handsome man, and I warrant you he knowes it; diligent at Church, and he knowes it is so, &c. and he thinks his case the better;

nay,

nay, you shall have men so conceited of their parts, as that they will be conceited of their wicked parts, as *Simon Magus* was of his Sorcerie, *Act.* 8. 9.

Thirdly, when a *man is self-conceited of his actions*, he doth as *Sisera's* mothers Ladies did when they had given their verdict of *Siseras* slaying, they were presently conceited, oh what a wittie answer they made her; see *Judges* 5. 29. 30. as if they should say, we have answered very wisely, so a man cannot make a sermon, but presently hee is conceited oh what a learned Sermon it was, he cannot break a jest, but straight he is conceited, oh what a wittie one it was; nay, of wicked actions, you shall hear many an old man tell what prettie pranks (as hee calls them) he played in his youth, and he tells it laughingly, which is a signe that he is self-conceited, or else surely he would speak it with shame and greife of heart.

Fourthly and lastly, *self-conceit is when a man is self-conceited of the estate he is in.* Many a man though he be the child of hell, yet he is conceited that hee is the child of God; who with the wretch in the Gospel have conceits that they love God and

Christ, and therefore with him they will come to the *Sacraments*; but Christ will say to such as he did to him, friends how came you in hither? can you conceit your selves to be freinds? get you gon into utter darknesse (*i.e.*) into hell, saith our Saviour.

Now if you would know what *self-conceit* is, you must remember that it containes *foure things*.

First, where there is self-conceit, *there is no reall worth at all*; hee that is self-conceited is a base man; take that for a rule: A self-conceited fellow is a base fellow, as we use to say; there is no reall worth at all in a conceited man; all the worth that hee hath, is either *reall* as he thinks, or *conceitable*; now what *reall* worth can *self* have? You know what the Scripture saith, tis only in *imaginations*, and God scatters the proud in the imaginations of their hearts. *Luke* 1. 43. They it may be doe imagine that they are Gentlemen, or that they have faith, and yet God scatters these men in their imaginations.

Secondly, *as hee hath no reall worth in himself; so hee will not stand to the judgement of those that can judge him.* God can tell the

the worth of every thing, but they will not be judged by him; Gods Ministers out of Gods word can tell him that he hath no reason to think his case good; but he will not stand to the judgement of Gods Ministers. If a Minister should come to a man and say unto him, Sir, *you are conceited that you are a good Christian, I pray what signes have you for it? you pray, so doe Reprobates; you heare the word and receive the Sacraments, so doe Reprobates; hast thou no better signes then these? no better arguments then these? Why, I tell thee that a Reprobate hath these and more then these too.* A self-conceited man will be judged by none but by himself; A sluggard is wiser in his own conceit then seven men who can give a reason, *Prov.* 26.16. The sluggard is loth to take more paines; why, he thinks he takes paines enough, and so he is conceited, and more he will not doe; let *seven* men come and tell him that he must take more pains, yet he will not, and that because he is *conceited* that hee doth enough. Even so it is with the sluggish Christian, he is wise in his own conceit; for let *seven Ministers* come and tell him that hee must take *more* paines for heaven, or else he will never

come

come there; yet he will not *beleeve* them, he is wiser then so, they are fooles as hee thinks, though hee have no reason so to thinke; he indeed is not as he should bee, and Gods Ministers can bring reasons out of the Scriptures to prove it; for Wisdom is profitable to direct, *Eccles.* 10. 10. But every conceited man is a blinde man.

Thirdly, *A self-conceited man will not stand to the judgement of those that can judge him, so he hath an high a conceit of himself*; be he never so little godly, he is presently conceited he is a child of God; so if a man have never so little humility or patience, if hee come to Church, pray or doe but a few good duties in religion, hee thinks presently it is as a high wall unto him, and he shall goe to heaven cock sure; and let other men be never so holy, strict, religious, and pious in their waies, yet they are apt to think them Reprobates. If he see never so little slipps among them, hee is presently ready to say they are all naught; if any be false among them, hee is ready to say they are all hell-hounds; but if himself hee conceited that hee have never so little faith, oh presently hee thinks that is a high wall.

Fourthly,

Fourthly and laſtly, *hee reſteth in the judgement of himſelf*; and this is the caſe of thouſands in the world; they thinke well of their own caſes, when they dies they ſhall goe to heaven, there is no queſtion but Chriſt will ſave them, and from this conceit they will never be put; let all the Miniſters in the world come one after another, and diſcover unto a wicked man his eſtate, yet hee will not come from his own cenſure, for though you bray a foole in a morter among wheat with a peſtle, yet will not his fooliſhneſſe depart from him, *Prov.* 27. 22. So if you ſhould bray theſe men with the threatnings of the law, with the plagues contained in the Bible, making their conſciences black and blew (as we uſe to ſpeak) yet they will not leave off their conceitednesſe.

Now the reaſons hereof are foure.

1. *Becauſe all ſinners are fooles*; and the fooliſh ſhall not ſtand in Gods ſight, *Pſal.* 5. 5. All that work iniquity are fooles; a ſelf-conceited foole is a proverbe; and our Saviour who knew the combination of all ſinnes, joynes pride and fooliſhneſſe together, *Mark* 7. 22. a proud conceited man and a foole are put together by our Saviour.

Saviour. And this is the cause why so many thousands in the world are conceited of themselves that their case is good when tis nothing so, even because they are fools; none but fools will look more after pelf, then jewels, and prefer *transitorie* things before *heavenly*; yet such are the wise men of this world. That man is a fool that cannot eate his meate; and such is every sinner; his soule hath no food but Christ, the word and his promises; yet he knows not how to feed on them; he hath no cover to hide his nakednesse but Christ, &c. yet he knowes not how to put on Christ, therefore he is a fool.

Secondly, *men are borne fooles*; of all fooles none so self-conceited as the *born* foole; one that hath been a *wise man*, knowes how to hold his peace, but a *born* foole is invincible; *vain man would be wise, though he be borne like a wild Asses colt*, *Job* 11. 12. Of all creatures the foal of the Asse is the simplest; needs then must the wild Asses colt be most simple. So although a man be borne a foole, yet he would be counted wise; he is *conceited* that all the Ministers in the world cannot direct him; no, he is wise enough for that

matter

matter; this folly is bred and borne in him, he hath it by kind, and that is the reason that it is hardly clawed off, but they are ready to say they are as wise as the Ministers themselves.

I call not into question the wits of many; I know many of you are understanding men and women; but I speak now of the Wisdome of the *Spirit*, and how you may understand to *save* your soules. What is it for a man to be *worldly wise*, to get riches and honour, and to behave himselfe like a Gentleman, and yet a foole in seeking his salvation? this is to be *penny wise*; but here is the question, are you not *pound foolish?* can you go on in your sinnes, swearing, &c? then surely you are *pound foolish*; all your wisdome and money availes nothing; alas you are but penny Gentlemen. The Sodomites, *Gen.* 19. were blind, they could not find the doore; they could see well enough else, they were onely blind in this; so man is *stultus ad hoc*, wise enough for any thing in the world but this; take him for husbandrie, and his knowledge is good; for matter of carriage he can behave himselfe as well

as

as the wiſeſt; he is only *ſtultus ad hoc*, for ſalvation he is a foole, a born foole, and ſelf-conceited.

3. *Men are ſelf-conceited of their owne eſtate*; thoſe that praiſe themſelves wee uſe to ſay have ill neighbours; ſo if a fool had a good neighbour to tell him of his folly, and to laugh at him for it, he would not praiſe himſelfe; ſo he that praiſeth himſelfe, it is certaine he hath ill neighbours: ſo the reaſon why men are well conceited of themſelves, is becauſe they have ill neighbours; they think they are honeſt, and ſo do their neighbours, but now if a drunkard could go nowhere but that every one would tell him that he were a hellhound, he would not be drunk; but an ill neighbour he tels him he need not feare, by the grace of God he ſhall do well enough, he is a good Chriſtian; and hence it is that when fooles are not anſwered according to their folly, that they are conceited of themſelves; when men are ſoothed up, others thinke well of them, and they alſo think their owne caſes good; for ſay they, if I were not a good Chriſtian, ſuch and ſuch would not be acquainted with me.

Fourthly

Fourthly and lastly; *because the Lord delivers many up to the spirit of slumber*, *Rom.* 11. 8. Black poppy seed will cast a man into such a sleep as that his eyes shall be broad open, and yet he not see; so the Lord hath cast men into a slumber like a man betweene sleeping and waking, of all sleep none like to slumber, because it is full of imaginations; never is a man so full of dreams as then when he is in a slumber. If a man were a drunkard and in the deep of all evill, and lulld in the deep sea of security, he could not be so well conceited, but now that his eyes are halfe open, halfe shut, halfe awake, halfe asleepe, halfe out, halfe in, he thinkes his repentance is good, his case good, and he hopes he shall find mercie at the hands of God, as well as the best Puritan in the parish; they are like the dreamer (as *Iosephs* brethren termed him) singular, in Hebrew *the Master Dreamer*, they dreame they shall have mercie, and they shall not be damned, these men are in a slumber, *they have eyes and see not*, &c. *Esay* 28. they see the judgement of God, but *perceive* it not.

Con-

Consider what a wofull case these men are in, and how the Scripture calls this *selfe-conceit.*

First, it calls it nothing but a *thinking*; if a man think himselfe to be *something*, he is *nothing. Gal.6.3.* to think thy self a Christian, is a vain thought.

2. The Scripture calls it *superstition*, what a vaine thing it is for a man to be a supposing? they suppose they shall goe to heaven, they suppose they are better then others, better then those on whom the Tower of *Siloam* fell; and so many suppose they are not in the gall of bitternesse nor in the band of iniquity.

Thirdly, it calls them *shaddowes*; they walk in a vain shew *Psal.39.6. viz.* their repentance shewes as if it were good repentance. They can speak lowly, there is a shew that they are humble. Man walks in a *vain* shew, like a Tradesman who hath abundance of things which he makes shew of, yet are none of his own; so he talkes of *grace* which was never his own.

Fourthly, it calls them *imaginations*, *Acts 4.*

Fifthly, it calls them *appearances*, *Matth.6.16.* So men appeare all at a Sermon, but their

their hearts never lie down before the Word, there are nothing but ſeemings, 1 *Cor.*3. Thus you may think your ſelves or ſuppoſe your ſelves to be in good caſe, when as it were better thou didſt appeare to be a hell-hound then a Chriſtian, and not be ſo indeed; for then there were ſome hope that thou wouldſt look out. If a man be ſick, yet if he ſeem to be well, none will look out for him as they would doe if he ſeemed to be ſick indeed; and therefore this is the moſt dangerous ſickneſſe; ſo if men did ſeem to be damned wretches, that they were borne and continue in ſin, and when they dye they muſt be damned, if men feared thus, they would look out.

Secondly, *conſider ſo long as thou art well conceited of thy ſelf, Chriſt hath no commiſſion to call thee*; and Chriſt will doe nothing but what he hath *commiſſion* to doe, he will not runne into a *Præmunire*; Chriſt doth proteſt to all the world that hee hath no *commiſſion* from his Father for ſuch; *I am not come to call the righteous*, &c. *Matth.* 9.3. *viz.* thoſe that are *righteous* in their owne eſteeme and thoughts, but are not; if a man tell them that they are fitter for hell then for heaven, they are

better-conceited of themselves then so; if a man tell them for all their profession they may be hell-hounds, yet they conceit better of their profession then so; now then consider what a case thou art in, if thou bee out of Christs road.

Thirdly, *as Christ hath no commission, so he is glad he hath not*, and he gives thanks to his Father that he put him not into commission, I thank thee O Father, &c. *Luke* 10. 21. *q. d.* thou dost not convert those that are *self-conceited*, those that think they shall not be damned, such as conceit that they need no summons, that are righteous enough; Father, I am glad of it, &c. and it is said there that Jesus rejoyced, &c. I rather rejoyce that thou hast sent me to poor souls, such as are the offscouring of the world, &c. but he that is *selfe-conceited*, is wiser forsooth then so; Christ tels thee that thou must *take up* his crosse; but thou thinkest that thou hast more wit, thou canst goe a wiser way to worke; thou hast an easier way to heaven, thou wilt none of the Crosse; and I tell thee then that Christ will none of thee, but he will be glad to see thee damned.

Fourthly

Fourthly and lastly, *be it to the broad way to hell that it ſelfe-conceited*; there be many wayes to hell; the covetous goes one way, the Drunkard goes another, there are a thouſand wayes to hell; though there be ſundry wayes to hell, yet they all meet in *ſelfe-conceit*, there is the broad high way where all meet; *ſelfe-conceit* is not only the way to hell, but it is the *broad way* where all wayes meet. *There is a way* (ſaith the wiſe man) *that ſeems right, &c. Prov.* 14. 12 *but the end of it is death*; there is the wages, there all the wayes meet. Oh then examine your ſelves. I ſhould give you *ſignes* and *tokens* to make it appeare unto you; but the time will not give me leave. I will only name one or two. That man that ſelfe-ſweares, is conceited of himſelfe, that is one ſigne; As I am an honeſt man, As God ſhall help me, by my faith and troth, As I looke that the Lord ſhould ſave my ſoule, &c. theſe men are highly conceited of themſelves, they think that their ſalvation is ſure, yea ſo ſure that that they may ſweare by it, but theſe are deviliſh and damnable ſelfe-conceits;

it is Gods prerogative only *to sweare by himself*, Heb. 6. 13, 14. I speak this because I know it is a common practise among men, and a hellish brand of a curst self-conceited man.

2 All 58

THE

THE EFFICACIE Of Importunate PRAYER In two SERMONS.

BY

That laborious and faithfull Messenger of CHRIST,

WILLIAM FENNER, Sometimes Fellow of *Pembroke Hall* in *Cambridge*, and late Minister of *Rochford* in *Essex*.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

The Efficacie of Importunate Prayer.

Luke 11. 9.

Ask, and it ſhall be given unto you; Seek, and you ſhall find; Knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you.

OUr Saviour Christ being demanded by one of his Diſciples, *how they ſhould pray*; He here teaches them theſe two things. Firſt, a *Platform of prayer*, in the 2. 3. 4. verſes; Say, *Our father, &c.* Secondly, he teaches them the *Importunity of Prayer*, which he ſets forth by the ſimilitude of a man who having a gueſt

come to him at midnight, and had nothing to ſet before him, he went to his friend to intreat him to lend him three loaves, and at the firſt he nakedly intreats, Lend me three loaves: The door is ſhut, ſayes his friend, and I cannot open it now. Secondly, he falls to intreat and to beſeech him to do him this favour, He had a gueſt come to him, and he knew not what to do: Why; 'tis *midnight*, ſayes he, is there no other time to come but now? Thirdly, he begins to *knock*, he muſt needs have them, though it be at an unreaſonable hour. Why, I tell you I am in bed. Then he intreats him as a friend. Friend me no friends, ſayes he again. Yet the man would not leave knocking: at laſt with much adoe the man riſes, ſaying, Will you never be anſwered? and he lends him three loaves, becauſe of his *importunity*. Now, ſaith our Saviour, *I ſay unto you, though he would not give him as a friend, yet becauſe of his importunity he will.*

The ſimilitude is this: Thou art *that man*, oh Chriſtian ſoul, this gueſt is thy ſelf: Now then come home to *thy ſelf* with the *Prodigall*, who when he was come to himſelf, goes to his *father and friend.*

This

This friend is Christ, that thou art to pray unto; these three loaves are *grace*, *mercy*, and *peace*: These thou art to pray for; it may be Christ answereth thee in thy *conscience*, It is *midnight*, thou commest too late, there is no *mercy* for thee. The soul *prayes still*, Oh Lord awaken and help me: it may be the Lord will answer thee by *terror* in thy soul, The door of mercy is shut, thou shouldest have come rather. Yet Lord, open unto me, sayes the soul: Nay, saith the Lord, all my children have mercy already; now mercy is asleep, I have converted them already; they came in due season, thou commest at *midnight*, there is no mercy for such a hell-hound as thou art. Up Lord, have mercy on me, sayes the poor soule, and look on me, &c. Look me no looks, saith the Lord; I came to save the *lost sheep* of the *house of Israel*: there was a time when I would have converted *thee*, when I called unto *thee* early and late: But now I am asleep, and my mercy is asleep, it hath been awake as long as it could well hold open its eyes; and commest thou *now*? Oh the soul cries still, and will never give over: if mercy be to be had at the throne of grace, he will have it.

it. Even as a begger being at a gentlemans door, they bidding him be gone, there is nothing to be had: nay, sayes the begger, I will not be gone, here is something to be had, and I will have something, or else I will die at the door: The gentleman hearing him say so, thinks it would be a shame for if him if he should *die* at his door, and gives him somewhat: So when the soul is thus *importunate*, because of importunity it shall be granted. *Verily I say unto you, if you thus* aske, it shall be given unto you.

These words contain in them the *main* duty of *importunate* prayer. *Ask*; if asking will not serve turn, *seek*; if seeking will not serve turn, then *knock*: try all meanes.

Another parable our Saviour put forth, *Luke* 18. 1, 2. *that men ought alwaies to pray, and not to faint.* There was a poor woman wronged by her adversary, and there was no Judge to right her but a wicked one, so that she had but poor hopes; yet she resolves to go, or else she shall be undone; therefore if she perish, she will perish at his feet. He cals her all to nought. Oh, for Gods sake help me, sayes she. I

care

care not for God nor man, says the Judge: Nay, good my Lord, saith the woman. The Judge seeing her thus importunate, said, I shall be troubled with her if I do her not justice. *How much more* (saith the text) *shall not God avenge his elect that cry day and night?*

Obj. But some man may demand, what is *importunate prayer?*

Ans. I answer, it is a *restlesse* prayer, which will take no nay, nor contumelious repulse, but is in a holy manner *impudent* untill it speed; and there are in it foure things:

First, it is *restlesse:* he that is importunate, cannot rest till he speed in his suit before God: as the poor woman of *Canaan*, she sought the Lord God of heaven and earth, (she was of the cursed stock of *Cham* whom the Lord commanded to destroy; yet she repented, and became of the faith of *Abraham*) to see if the Lord would own her: but the Lord seemed to reject her, and suffer'd the devil to possesse her daughter. Now, what, might not this poor woman think she had made a sorry change of religion, seeing that God the author of of it would not own her, but suffered the devil

devil to poſſeſſe her daughter. But ſee the *importunity* of this woman, ſhe would not be quiet untill ſhe had found Chriſt, *Mark* 7.24,25. Chriſt could not be hid. No? What, could he not hide himſelf in ſome corner? No, no, thinks ſhe, there is a Chriſt, and if he be to be had under the cope of heaven, I will have him. Even ſo it is with the ſoul that is *importunate* in prayer, it is reſtleſſe. What if Chriſt do hide himſelf in the Word, &c. and will not owne a poor ſoule; yet the poor ſoule knowes there is a Chriſt, and if he be to be found in the whole world, he will have him: I will, ſaith he, turn over all duties, I will go to all the Miniſters that are neer, I will uſe *all the means*. Now Chriſt cannot be hid from ſuch a ſoule that is thus importunate.

Now as it is a Prayer that will take no *nay*, ſo firſt it will take no *privative nay* of ſilence; Secondly, no *poſitive nay* of denial.

Firſt, no poſitive nay of ſilence: A man that is importunate in prayer, muſt and will have ſome anſwer; he is not like *Baals* Prieſts, that could get no anſwer, 1 *King.* 18.26. nor like wicked men that pray in their pewes, they know not what,

nor

nor whether God hears them or no: but an importunate prayer will have an *answer*, like the woman of Canaan: *Have mercy on me O Lord* (said she); but *Christ answered not a word.* Hath she done then? No, she cries so much the more, *Have mercy on me ô Lord:* yea she was so importunate, that his Disciples were ashamed to heare her; yet she cryed, *Have mercy on my daughter*; the devil hath my daughter, and misery will have me, unlesse thou wilt have mercy on us. Christ answered her never a word. It was much trouble to her to have her daughter vext with a devil; but this troubled her much more, that Christ in whom all her hope was, would not hear her, nor lend her one look. What? might she think, Is this the mercifull Saviour, that is so full of pitty and compassion? Is this he that hath made proclamation to all the world, saying, *Come unto me all ye that are weary, &c?* and I am tyred and wearied by reason of the devil that possesses my daughter &c. yet he regards me not. Thus she might have said: yet these discouragements could not put her off, but *she cried so much the more*, yea so that the Apostles were ashamed that Christ should let her stand

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on that fashion; yet she stood it out, and prevailed.

Secondly, it will take no *positive nay* of denial: For when she had an answer, and that flat against her, it was like bellowes to the fire, she was so much the more inflamed, she doubles her forces; *Have mercy on me O Lord*, &c. Christ put her off with a denial, *I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*; I come for *sheep*, not for *goats*; you are of the *Canaanites*, on whom I have set a brand of damnation, *a servant of servants*, a slave of hell and darknesse: These are all of your blood; but I come to save them of the house of *Israel*. But the denial of an *importunate* soul is like the stop in a passage of water; the more it is stopt, the more violent it is: so this poor woman is so much the more eager with Christ; she did but *cry* before, now she *worships* him, *vers.* 24. 25. as if she should have said, Lord help me now, I am one of thy *lost sheep*; I confesse I am a Canaanite, I am of that damned blood; yet Lord help me; I am perswaded that thou canst take a course whereby to help me, Thou canst cast some mercy on a Canaanite.

Thus

Thus you see, an *importunate* soul will take no denial, but will renew its forces at the Throne of grace.

Thirdly, *an importunate prayer will take no contumelious repulse*; suppose God should answere never a syllable of thy prayer, yet thou wilt pray; suppose he doe answer, and that against thee, yet still thou wilt pray. Nay suppose he call thee all to nought making thy conscience tell thee of all thy sins and abominations, making thee think that heaven is shut up against thee, and God hath shut his eares, calling thee Dog, hell-hound, and wretch, &c. yet nothing can breake thee off if thou be *importunate* indeed. So this woman was not beaten off with Christ sending the Devill into her Daughter, nor with Christ hiding himselfe when she sought him; nor with Christs answering never a word, nor with the Apostles frumps, nor with his denyall, nor contumelious repulse, for he called her *dog*, vers. 26. Hence dog, I had as lieve fling my mercy on a dog, as on thee. What creature but an *importunate* one, could have gone so far? But see here the nature of *importunity*,

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it gets within Christ and takes advantage: she confest the cause, saying, *Truth Lord*, thou hast hit me right, I am a dog, or a wicked woman; let me then have the priviledges that dogs have; though dogs may not be equal with children at the table, yet they may wait under the table: I acknowledge that thy children are so plentifully fed, that some *crummes* fall from the table, therefore let me have the *priviledge* of a dog. *Naaman* the Syrian was a dog, as well as *I*; *Rahab* the harlot was a dog, as well as *I*; *Ruth* a dog, as well as *I*; yet these got crummes: truth Lord, I am a dog, yet thy mercy can metamorphise a dog: Of these *stones* thou canst raise *children* to *Abraham*. Thus it is with an importunate soul; though God call it all to naught, and cast all ignominious terms upon it, as, I had as lief thou shouldest offer me swines blood, as to speak in my hearing; yet if thou be *importunate*, thou wilt beare any contumelious repulse.

Fourthly, *an importunate prayer is in an holy manner*: And as an impudent begger that is needy, counts it no manners to hold his peace from begging, although he be bidden; Or as a poor petitioner to the King

King, the King bids him hold his peace, yet he will not, but still he goes on: The officers say, Thou filthy fellow, wilt thou never have done? dost thou not see that the King is angry? Yet he still cries, Help me Lord, O King. So the Canaanitish woman, or an importunate prayer, is an *impudent* prayer, yet in a *holy* manner.

I remember a story of a poor woman in *Essex* condemned to die: she falls to crying and screeching as if she meant to pierce the heavens; the Judge and those on the bench bid her hold her peace: O my Lord, said she, it is for *my life* I beg, I beseech you, it is for *my life*. So when a soul comes before God, and begs for mercy, he must consider that it is for his life, O Lord it is for my life. Now though the Lord will not answer, and though he call the soul all to nought, letting it go up and down with a heavy heart, yet the soul crying out, 'Tis for my life, if I must go to hell, I will go to hell from the throne of grace, weeping and wailing for my sinnes, and catching hold on the horns of the altar: this soul shall find mercy.

I have wondered at the story in the 5. chapter of *Luke*, it is a strange passage,

where this godly kind of impudencie was seen. Our Saviour Christ was preaching in the house to the people, and there was a poor man that could not tell how to come to Christ; so the poor man got some to lift him up to the top of the house, and to untile it, and so to let him down; now the rubbish could not choose but fall either on Christs head, or on the heads of some of his hearers; Was not this an impudent action? could not this man have stayed untill the sermon had been ended? But *importunity* hath no manners: And although he did interrupt Christ, yet Christ asked him not why he did so, but sayes, *Man, be of good comfort, thy sins be forgiven thee.* Let us therefore come with boldnesse unto the Throne of grace, *Heb.* 4. 16. with freedom to talk any thing; Not as if God had given us leave to be irreverent, but as to a loving generous man, of whom we use to say, He is so kinde, you may say any thing unto him; come to him at dinner, he will rise up and hear you, or what businesse soever he be about, yet he will hear you. Even so it is with God: he is such a God that all poor souls may be bold before him to speak what they will, they may

may lay open their cases, and shew their estates. Now when soules come boldly, and give the Lord no rest till he establish them, *Esai. 62. 7.* then saith God, How now, cannot I be at rest for you? &c. This *holy* kind of impudencie is in prayer, and it will give the Lord no rest.

Reasons *why we must seek importunately*, are three.

Fifth, *in regard of Gods majesty*, he loves to be sought unto, and it is fit he should be sought unto. Among men, we account it a matter of too much statelinesse to be *much intreated*, and we use to say *he loves to bee intreated*; this is a fault among men; yet for all this, *Quis vestrum*, &c. as *Seneca* speaks, what man of us can be content to be but once, or sleightly entreated? when a man comes to intreat a kindnesse of a man there is *sing and finding* and *shall I*, &c. nothing but *importunitie* can get a kindnesse of a man; and this is a sinne among men, because men are bound to doe good; but the Lord is not bound to us. If we sinne, he is not bound to pardon us therefore; the Lord being a God of majesty, lookes

to be *sought unto* of us for his mercie, and he lookes that we should be importunate; and hence it is that God saith *I will give you a new heart*, Ezechiel 36. I will vouchsafe you all these favours, yet *I will look to be inquired for of you*. verse 76. I will look that they shall send to me for these things.

Suppose a man should need a 100 pound; What, saith the gentleman, doth he think a Thousand pound is nothing? I will have good security for it. So when we come for such high mercies as these, for such infinite compassions; these are somewhat, and God looks to be *sought unto* for them; and Christ the Son of God is a great heire, and those that are faulten to him, must be *importunate* with him, if they mean to be at peace with him.

If one will marry a rich heir, who hath all the preferment & dignity that the country can afford, he looks to be well sued unto. So the Lord Jesus is a great heire, heire of the whole world; if thou goest to be married unto him, thou must sue unto him, and he looks for *prayer*, he loves to heare his children crie: this is one of his titles, though he be a God, yet he is *the hearer of prayer*, Psal. 65. 2.

Again,

Again, we have wronged his Majeſtie. Suppoſe thy ſervant wrong thee, thou wilt ſay thou wilt pardon him, but firſt thou wilt make him humble himſelf unto thee, he ſhall & muſt know that he hath wronged a good maſter: So God is willing to pardon thee, but yet he will make thy bowels know that thou haſt ſinned againſt a good God; he will make it appeare by thy prayer, he will make thy ſpirit melt, he will fill thy face with ſhame and confuſion, he will make thee know what a patient God thou haſt rebelled againſt, or elſe the Lord will never pardon thee. Doeſt thou think to pacifie God with a *lazie* prayer, with comming to Church and ſaying, Have mercy upon me, moſt merciful Father? Doeſt thou think that the Lord will have mercy upon thee for this? No, no, he may ſend thee quick to hell for all this; he will make thee cry and cry again with groans, he will make thee cry out and pray on another gates faſhion, and he will make the ſoveraignty of his mercy to be ſeen in thy ſalvation: therefore in regard of Gods majeſty, he loves men ſhould be importunate.

Secondly, in regard of Gods *mercy*; it is a disgrace for Mercy to be begged *frigidly*; 'tis a disgrace to Gods bounty, for a man to beg it with *lukewarm* importunity. What makest thou of the mercy of God? dost thou think that it is not worth a *groan*, with the running over of a *Paternoster*? doest thou make Gods mercy of such base reckoning? this is a disgrace to Gods goodnesse, to be so cold or frigid in prayer. Thou hast offered many offerings, yet I scorn them, saith God, *Esa.* 43. 23. Thou hast not honoured me with them, thou hast not called on me, thou hast been weary of calling on me, thou hast too short a breath in thy prayers, thou carest not how soon thou commest to an end? Do you come and lay *lazie* prayers upon my altar? Thou hast not honoured me.

It was a custome among the Romans, when any was condemned to die, if he looked for mercy, he was to bring father and mother, and all his kinsmen and acquaintance, and they should all come with teares in their faces, and with tattered garments, and kneel down and beg before the Judge, and cry mightily; and then they thought Justice was honoured. Thus they

honoured

honoured justice in man, for a man condemned to die; and so the Lord loves his mercy should be *honoured*, &c. and therefore he will have prayer to be *importunate*, that it may appear by *groans* how *highly* we esteem of grace; our soules must pant and gasp after grace, the breath of the Lord being the soul of our souls, our hearts will die without it: This is to the *honour* of mercy, therefore the Lord will have us *importunate*.

Thirdly, *as importunity must be in regard of Gods mercy, so it must be in regard of our selves*, else we cannot tell how to esteem it: Soon come, soon gone; lightly gotten, suddenly forgotten; I have it, come let us be jovial and spend it, when this is gone, I know where to have more. But if he had wrought for it, and also must work for more, if he meant to have more, he would better esteem it. The world little esteems Mercy; what's the reason? The greatest covetous men are they that once were poor; when a poor man hath gotten store of riches, he is more covetous then he that was borne to hundreds or thousands; they are careless of it, and spend lavishly, whilst a covetous mans

teeth water at it; and the reason is, because they come lightly by it. Therefore the Lord loves that we should come *hardly* by our mercy; not as if he *sold* mercy for our *paines*, but for our good: yet we are not capable of it. See *Jer.* 31. 9. where the Lord speaks thus to his people: *They shall come with weeping, and with supplication will I lead them.* This is a fine phrase, God *leads a soul* up and down with supplication, before he grants his request; just as a begger on the high-way, a gentleman comming by, he begs of him, the gentleman goes on his way as if he took no notice, but the begger goes on crying, For Gods sake (sir) bestow something on me; yet he goes on still, till at last the gentleman comes to his house, and then he gives him his desire. Even so God *leads* a soul up and down from one good duty to another, till he have brought the soul to that passe that he would have it to be, and then he hears it, and sayes, What is thy suit? I will pardon thee.

What then is the reason, may some man say, why so few are *importunate* in prayer?

I answer, first, because *men covet Prayer a penance*; there is a naturall kind of Popery

pery in mens breasts; the Papists, when men sin, their Priests enjoyn them penance, as pilgrimages and scourgings, so many *Pater-noster's*, and so many *Ave-Marie's*, where they reckon Prayer to be a penance. This naturall Popery is in mens breasts; they count Prayer laborious unto them, and they are weary of it, they are not eager upon prayer, they look not on Prayer as a blessing, but as a *yoak*; behold what a wearisome thing it is, *Mal.* 1. 13. They were *weary* of the service of God; Oh, say they, that the Minister would once have done! they had rather be in an Alehouse, or about their busines; all good duties are as *penance* unto carnal men. If a man be to do *penance*, he cares not how little he does of it; a Rogue cares not for too much whipping.

Secondly, *Men content themselves with formality.* Many men *pray*, as *Haman* spake the Kings words before *Mordecai*, for he had rather have led him to the gallows, than to have said, *Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the King will honour*: but he thought it would be the worse for him if he spake them not, and therefore he only spake them for *forme*. And so men

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for the moſt part go to church, to hear the Word, to Pray, to receive the Sacraments &c. even for *forme*, or becauſe it is the faſhion, and they think if they do not thus and thus, they ſhall not be ſaved.

You ſhall have the Drunkard ſay, I am ſorry for my drunkenneſſe; but he lies, for the next day he will be at the Alehouſe again: ſo the Whoremaſter ſayes, Lord I am ſorry that I have ſinned againſt thee; but he lies; for the next Quean that he meets with, having opportunity, he falls to whoreing again: So the Coveтous man will ſay, I am ſorry I am ſo full of earthly thoughts; yet he lies; he is not ſorry; for you ſhall have him carking and caring all the day long, and he hath a thouſand proclamations in his head; He only prayes for *form* with the reſt, they only *ſay* prayer, they *pray* not. I deny not *ſaying* of prayer, if they *pray*; Our Saviour Chriſt ſaith, When you pray, ſay *Our father*. The proud man diſhonours Gods name, ſaying, *Thy will be done*; whereas he ſhould be *humble*, for that is Gods will; it is Gods will he ſhould be *zealous*, yet he prayes not: He ſayes, *Forgive us our treſpaſſes*, &c. but he prayes not ſo; for he wrongs his neigh-

neighbour, and his neighbour wrongs him, and he does not forgive those that trespasse against him. He sayes, *Lead us not into temptation*; but he prayes it not; for he runs presently into *temptations*, and hath no care to avoyd them. And this is the reason why men are not *importunate*, viz. because they do make *formality* of it.

Thirdly, *because they are Gentlemen-beggers.* Of all the beggers in the world, I would be loth to meet with a *gentleman-begger*, for he is the proudest of them all; if a man tell him that he hath been an *ill husband*, and hath abused himself, presently he sets his hands to his side, saying, I am not as every begger, I am *thus and thus* descended, *I* am as good a man by birth as your self: a gentleman-beggers heart will not stoop. So men are *gentlemen-beggers* to God, they were (say they) borne of Christian parents, and they have been baptized the children of God already; What, are none the children of God, but a company of Puritans? We are descended as well as the best of you all. These are proud and not as yet brought to a *sense* of their own misery.

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When *John* did preach to, and baptize the Scribes and Pharisees, he calls them all to nought, O yē *vipers* and full of poison, *who hath forewarned you to flee from the anger to come?* Viper, say they? Viper in thy teeth, we are the children of *Abraham*, we are better descended then so, we are Believers, and do you call us *vipers?* then indeed we might crie out, Oh we are damned! then we had need to crie for mercie. And in this sense, men are *Gentlemen-beggers.*

Another reason why men are not importunate, is, because *they have wrong conceits of Prayer.* I will tell you the sundry conceits of men,

First, *they have high conceits of their own prayers*; they cannot pray in a morning, between the pillow and the blankers, half asleep and half awake, but they think that they have done God good service; so that he cannot afford to damne them: At night he saies, *Lord have mercie on me*, and so goes to sleep, and then he thinks God must keep him untill the morning: So when he goes to dinner, he saies, *Lord blesse these creatures unto us*, and so falls aboard, and he thinks that God must needs sanctifie

ſatisfie them unto him; and after ſupper he goes to prayer, and ſo to bed, and thinks that he ſhall be heard for his much babling ſake, *Mat.* 6. they think God will have mercy on them. But poor ſoules, if they knew how *unſeemingly* they prayed, how *unfitly*, and what wane there is in *ſeeing* their own eſtate, they would ſay, is this to pray for my ſoul, for ſuch infinite mercie? Lord, how do I abuſe the throne of grace? how do I abuſe thy ſabbaths, thy houſe, thy name, and all the holy ordinances which I go about? A man that is *importunate* in prayer, is aſhamed; but when they think *highly* of their prayers, they are inſolent, their prayers are damned, and they too.

Secondly, *as men have high conceits of their prayers, ſo they have mean conceits of their ſinnes*, they think not their ſinnes ſo bad as they are. Theſe men are like *Absen*, who ſaid, *Let the young men ariſe and play before me*, 2 Sam. 2. 14. They account murder a ſport, and dancing and muſicking little worſe then *Davids* playing on the harp, *Amos* 6. 5. And if they commit adulterie, they ſay that's but a trick of youth; if they tell a lie, it is only at a dead

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lift when they have no other shift. That man that doth not think of every sinne he commits, as *David* did of his, even to make his heart to *ake* for it, that man shall never speed well before God.

Thirdly, *as men have mean thoughts of their sinnes, so they have base thoughts of God.* They cannot think that God should damne a man for *drinking a pot with his friend*; I cannot think God will be so strict; No, no, I love God with all my heart, say they; and they think that God is of their mind; and if they were as God, they would not be so strict. So, *Psal.* 50. *They thought I was such a one as themselves*; they think God will pardon them; and therefore because of this, men are not *importunate* with God. God hath sent me a crosse (saith one) but I hope to rub it off well enough. Why? *God will not keep his anger for ever*, Jer. 3. 5. Suppose a man be absent from Church, or break out into some unsavoury speech, will God be angry for this? Suppose a man be negligent in a good duty, will God require every dayes work? Tush, tush, God will not, *Psal.* 10. 13. A company of Puritans say he will, but I know he will not: and thence

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it is, that men will not be *importunate*.

Laſtly, becauſe *they have wrong conceits of importunity*. If a man knock once or twice, or thrice, and none anſwer, preſently he will be gone; this is for want of manners; thou wilt knock ſeven times, if thou be *importunate* with them: They within may ſay, Hold thy peace, be gone, &c. but thou wilt not ſo be anſwered.

Beloved, men are cloſe-handed, they are loth to give; and they are cloſe-hearted too, they are loth to take the pains to *ask* of *God*; they are loth others ſhould be be *importunate* with them, and therefore they are loth to be *importunate* with God. Examine your ſelves then in this duty; for *importunate prayer is evermore the prayer of an importunate man.*

THE

is, that men will not be importu-

Lastly, because they have wrong conceit of importunity. If a man knock once or twice, or thrice, and none answer, presently he will be gone; this is for want of manners; thou wilt knock seven times, if thou be importunate with them: They within may say, Hold thy peace, be gone, &c. but thou wilt not so be answered.

Beloved, men are cloie-handed, they are loth to give, and they are cloie-hearted too, they are loth to take the pains to ask of God; they are loth others should be importunate with him; and therefore they are loth to be importunate with God. Examine your selves then in this duty of importunate prayer as concerning the prayer of an importunate man.

THE

THE EFFICACIE Of Importunate PRAYER

The second Sermon.

BY

That laborious and faithfull Messenger of CHRIST,

WILLIAM FENNER, Sometimes Fellow of *Pembroke Hall* in *Cambridge*, and late Minister of *Rochford* in *Essex*.

BRITISH MUSEUM

The Efficacie of Importunate Prayer.

Luke 11. 9.

Ask, and it ſhall be given unto you; Seek, and you ſhall find; Knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you.

TO proceed then: There be ſix ſignes to know whether our Prayers be *importunate*, or no.

Firſt, *importunate prayer is evermore the prayer of an importunate man*; and the man is importunate, if his praier be importunate: But how can a *man* importune God for mercy, when his *perſon* importunes

tunes God for vengeance? It must be the prayer of a *godly* heart; *Preserve my soule, for* I *am holy*. Psal. 86. 1, 2. *David* makes a prayer, and he was *holy* when he made it; his prayer could tell him that he was one that labored to work in holines. Therefore when thou goest to God in praier, consider whether thou canst say, *Lord hear me, for* I *am holy*, and I would fain be *holy*: but if the saying of these words choak thee, then thy prayer *condemns* thee.

Of all begging, it is a great matter *who it is* that begs at the door: *Who is that*, saith the indweller? and when he opens the door and sees it is a *thief*, &c. Oh, *is it you*, saies he; you may stand long enough, you shall never have alms of me. So in praier, it is all in all *who it is* that prayes.

The woman in the Gospel having an issue, touched our Saviour; he looking about, asked *who touched him*; and when he saw the woman, Oh is it you, saies he, be of good chear, *Luk.* 8. 48. So when a man prayes to God, *Who is that*, saies God, that would have these mercies? And when the Lord sees it a Drunkard, or a covetous man, &c. *is it you?* saies the Lord; you may stay till Dooms-day, and yet never find

find mercie. The ſpirit of ſupplication and the ſpirit of prayer, is called the ſpirit of grace, *Zach.* 12. 10. If then thou haſt not the ſpirit of *grace*, thou canſt not *pray*. The text ſaith not, Whoſoever asketh the Father in my name, but, whatſoever *can* ask the Father in my name? there is many a man may uſe the name of Chriſt at the throne of grace, but certain it is none but thoſe that are in Chriſt can pray, and with them every thing operates. A man that will walk with God in obedience to his laws, muſt be a holy man: hence is that ſaying of our Saviour, *John* 15. 7. a place fit for the purpoſe; *If you abide in me, and my word abide in you, &c.* as if he ſhould have ſaid, You may ask what you pleaſe, & intreat God all the daies of your life; yet unleſſe *you abide in me*, you cannot ſpeed. That man that walks not in *holineſſe* of life, can never be an *importunate* orator as was *Moſes* the man of God, but a wicked mans prayer (as *Auguſtine* ſpeaks) is *tanquam latratus canum*, &c. no better then the barking of dogs, or the grunting of ſwine: therefore you whoſe *conſciences* tell you that you live in ſin, your praiers never ſpeed at the throne of *grace* for *eternal mercie*.

Secondly, *an importunate praier is the praier of a pure conscience.* Suppose a man doth not see that he lives in sin, yet if his conscience erie guilty, if he have a foul conscience, his praier never prevails with God. *If I regard wickednesse in my heart, the Lord will not hear my praier,* saith *David,* Psal.66.18. that is, if I can say, or my *conscience* can tell me that I *regard* iniquitie in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. A man must have a *pure* conscience, 2 *Tim.* 1.3. else let him not look God in the face, beg he may, but he shall never *speed* as long as he goes on with a conscience that can tel him he *regards* iniquitie.

There be many *pray,* (for indeed their conscience will make them *pray*) but they may *pray* till they come to hell, yet they shall never be delivered, if there be but *one* sin unrepented of.

I remember a storie of a poor woman being troubled in conscience, and many Ministers using to visit her, at last came one which (after much talk and praying) hit upon one sin which she was guilty of, and loth to part with; Then the woman cried out, Till now you have spoken to the post, but *now* you have hit the mark, my

conscience

conſcience tels me I have been loth to part with *this* ſin, but I muſt leave it, or elſe I cannot be ſaved.

Mala conſcientia bene ſperare non poteſt. The Pagans had ſo much divinitie, as to ſay *The gods muſt be honoured with puritie*; therefore they wrote on the doors of their temples, *Let none having a guilty conſcience enter this place,*

Thirdly, *Importunate prayer is evermore a prayer that is full of ſtrong arguments.* And hence it is that *Job* ſaith, *I will fill my mouth with arguments*, Job 23. 4. like an importunate man, who will bring *all* reaſons and arguments to *effect* his cauſe; even ſo an importunate man at the throne of *grace*, will bring *all* arguments to perſwade God. If a man be to pray for any *particular* grace, he will bring *all* the arguments he can deviſe to get it; as, Lord, it is a grace of the Covenant, for the want whereof I endure many temptations; thou haſt made me a Miniſter, I cannot work on mens conſciences untill I have it; he preſſeth all arguments he can deviſe. A good *orator* before God, muſt be a good *logician.* It was noted of the High-Prieſts that were to pray before God, they were

to have *Urim* and *Thummim*, and that was two parts of Logick, *viz.* knowledge and perfection: such a one should a Minister be, he must be a good Logitian at the throne of grace.

Fourthly, *importunate prayer is a stout prayer*; Continue in praier, saith the Apostle, *Col.* 4. 2. a *weak-hearted* praier is a *cold* praier, a praier without a spirit; yet these men that have weak spirits to *pray*, have strong enough to sin, and wit enough to sin, and knowledge enough to sin; but bring them to grace, then they have no *strength*. Thou canst not strive to prevail with God, unlesse thou *stand* to it. How came *Jacob* to *prevail* with God, but by *wrestling*? Prayer is called *fighting*, it is a holy kind of *violence*. Thou canst not obtain a mercie at Gods hand, unlesse thou lay all thy force on it. Even as a Father who hath an apple in his hand, and his child would fain have it; he first opens one finger, then another, till the apple drop out. So is it with a poor soul at the throne of grace; the Lord opens his hands, and fills all things living with plenteousnesse; What is the meanes that is used? why, the praiers of his children; they by their praiers

praiers open Gods hand, and ſo make the bleſſings to deſcend. Go for grace; why, the Lord will ſay unto thee, Thou art proud, thou muſt be humble, *and ſo open that finger*; Thou art careleſſe, thou muſt go quicken thy ſelf, *and ſo open that finger*: God ſaies, thou wilt not make much of *this* grace when thou haſt it, but thou wilt turn it into wantonneſſe; then thy ſoul muſt learn to *mortifie* its members, *and ſo open that finger*; thou canſt not get grace at Gods hand, unleſſe thou do *open all his fingers*, and then it will fall down. There is a ſeverall power in all Gods children, ſome have more, ſome have leſſe, yet all muſt be *powerful*, elſe none can *prevaile* with God.

Fifthly, *if thou pray importunately, thou praieſt wakefully*; he muſt be deeply awake that *praies*; his ſoul, his heart, his underſtanding muſt be awake: that man that praies drowſilie, praies not powerfullie; *Watch* therefore, ſaith Chriſt, and *pray*, *Luk.* 21. 36. Watch to pray. *q. d.* for as there is a ſleepie *head*, ſo there is a ſleepie *heart*. As a Begger who is begging, is all awake, head, feet, hands, &c. all is awake to beg; ſo muſt that ſoul be that means to ſpeed in praier. Sixth-

Sixthly, *importunate praier is an aſſurance-getting praier*; a praier that will not be quiet till it have got aſſurance that God hath heard it. Wicked men *pray*, and preſume that God hears them; but God hears them not; nay, many of Gods dear children *pray* many times, and are not heard. *How long wilt thou be angry with thy people that praieth?* Pſ. 80. 4. Not only with their *perſons*, but with their *praiers* alſo. How then, think you, is the praier of ſuch as live in their ſins taken? who *pray*, but their praiers vaniſh away in the aire like clouds: theſe may *pray* and *pray*, but they get nothing.

Behold he praies, ſaith the voice to *Saul* Act. 9. 22. What, did he not *pray* before? Yes, he had made many a long praier, elſe he could not have been a Phariſee; but now he did not onlie *pray*, but he praied unto *God* as *David* did, who did *lift up his heart to God*, Pſal. 25. 1. or elſe his heart could not have praied; and then in the next verſe *David* begins his praier. Our hearts are juſt like a bell, which ſo long as it lies on the ground will make no muſick, till it be lifted up; Our hearts are not like the bell of *Rochea*, which (*they ſay*) will ring

ring of its own accord; but our hearts must be lifted up, else they will make no delightful musick in the eares of God. Wherefore if you *pray*, and labour not to bring your hearts home to God, that so he may hear them in mercie, he will (*it may be*) heare them, but it will be to your *condemnation*, as he hears the praiers of wicked men: therefore if thou praiest, pray fervently.

There be six or seven marks of Praier that is not importunate, and he that praies so, may go to hell, for ought I know.

The first is a *lazie* praier; An importunate man works hard to bring up his suit; his understanding, his counsel, and all his policie works: so if the soul be *importunate*, then it is a *working* praier. Praier is a labour, 2 *Cor.* 1. *Labour with me in praier.* That man that plowes his field, and digs his vineyard, *that man* praies for a good harvest; if a man *pray* to God never so much, yet if he do not use the *meanes*, he cannot obtain the thing he praies for. Even so it is with grace; A man may *pray* for all the graces of Gods spirit, and yet never get any, unlesse he labour for them in the use of the means. God cannot abide lazie

beggers,

beggers, that cannot abide to follow their calling, but if they can get any thing by begging, they will never set themselves to work. So, many there be, that if they can get *pardon* of sin for *begging*, then they will have it; but let such know that the Lord will not give it for such lazie kind of praying; but if thou wilt have pardon of sin, thou must labour for it, thou must get it with thy fingers ends; God gives not men Repentance, Faith, &c. by *miracles*, but by *means*: Thou must then use the *means*, and keep watch and ward over thine own soul, that so thou maiest get the grace thou praiest for.

Secondly, *a praier that is not a full praier never speeds with God*; but an importunate praier is a *full* praier, it is a *pouring* out of the heart, yea of the *whole* heart, Psal. 62. 8. the Psalmist saith, *poure out your hearts before him*, trust in him at all times, poure out your hearts (the addition is made in the Lamentations of Jeremie) *like water*. It may be thou poureſt out thy *praier* like tar out of a tar-box, half sticking by the sides; but when thou praiest, thou must out with *all* before God. When thou giveſt thanks, doſt thou labour to remember

all

all the bleſſings of God? when thou doſt petition to God, doſt thou poure out *all* thy heart before him? doſt thou caſt all thy care on God?

Thirdly, *Snatch-prayer is no importunate prayer*; when men pray by ſnatches, or peecemeals, by breaking off a limme of their praier, becauſe of ſluggiſhneſſe, or becauſe their hearts are eager about other buſineſſe; it is not good to truſt *fire* of devotion; 'tis a baſe kind of *praying*, when men *gallop* over their praiers, that ſo they may come to an end *quickly*. Should I accept this at your hands, ſaith God by his Prophet? when they brought a ſheep, it wanted a lim, they were loth to give God a whole offering, *Mal.* 1. 13. Many pray a peece of a praier in the morning, and then they go after the world; he down's on his knees, and gives God a rag of a praier, a companie of ragged ends; And God counts it an indignitie; *ſhall I accept* this (ſaith he)? What, a lame praier? No, no, the Lord looks for a *prayer* that hath its full growth; it is a ſhame to ſpeak in the congregation what men do in *ſecret* before God, which many have confeſſed after they have been converted,

how

how they have gone into *Gods presence*, and have ſhuffled over their praiers, thinking every houre ſeven, untill they had done.

Fourthly, *Silent praiers are never importunate.* I mean by *ſilent* praier, when a man is *ſilent in that which God looks he ſhould moſt inſiſt upon.* David made a praier, *Pſal.* 32. and the Lord looked that he ſhould ſtand much upon his *adulterie* and *murther* which he had committed, to ſee what ſhame he took on him for it; but he ſhuffled it over: and what ſaith the text? *When I kept ſilence*; what, did the Prophet *roare*, and yet *keep ſilence*? theſe are contradictions. Yea, the Prophet *roared*, and *kept ſilence*; as if he ſhould ſay, the Lord counted his praier but roaring, ſo long as he laid not open *that* ſinne which the Lord lookt he ſhould have ſtood on; the Lord let him roare, and roare he might long enough, but (ſaith he) I *brake my ſilence*, I ſaid I will confeſſe my tranſgreſſions, and then thou forgaveſt the wickednes of my ſin. So many go to God, and tell God they muſt needs have mercie, and fain they would have mercie, and yet they are *ſilent* in *confeſſing* the *ſinne* they ſhould.

I

I ſay, the Lord will never hear that man; he may *pray* to God all his life, and yet go to hel in the end. Haſt thou been a *drunkard*, and doſt thou think that the Lord will forgive thee for crying, *Lord forgive me &c?* No, no, thou muſt *inſiſt* on it, and ſay, *Againſt thy word I have been a drunkard; my conſcience told me ſo, but I would not heare; I haue felt the motions of thy holy ſpirit ſtirring againſt me, and I regarded not; Now if thou ſhouldeſt turn me into hell, I were well requited; ſo many Sermons haue I neglected; I haue wronged others in this kind, and I haue been the cauſe why many are now in hell, if they repented not. I haue praied for mercie, yet with the dog to his vomit haue I returned, and therefore for all my praiers thou maieſt caſt me into hell for ever; and now I haue praid, yet it is a hundred to one but I ſhall run into my old ſin again; yet as I expect forgiveneſſe, ſo I deſire to make a covenant to give over all my ſinful courſes, and I am juſtly damned if I go to them again.* Such a kind of praier the Lord loves.

Fifthly, *Seldome praier is no importunate praier*; when the ſoul contents it ſelf with ſeldome comming before the throne of grace; an importunate ſoul is ever *frequenting*

quenting the way of mercie, and the gate of Christ; he is often at the threshold before God, in all praier and humiliation.

The reeling'st Drunkard in the world sometimes can do so too; the baseſt Adulterer in the world sometimes can be chaste: the Devil is quiet so long as he is pleased, and the wicked may sometime have a *fit* in praier. But this is the condition of an importunate heart, he is *frequent* at the throne of grace. The Prophet *David* praied *seven times* in a *day*; and *Hannah continued* in praier night and day.

Sixthly, *Lukewarm praier is not an importunate praier*; when a man praies, but is not *fervent*, when a man labours not to winde up his soul to God in praier. That man that praies *outwardly* only, that man teaches God how to denie his praier. Though you make many praiers, saith God, yet I will not hear you; *why?* Your hands are full of blood. *Qui frigidè orat, docet negare.* They are like luke-warme water, that never boils out the blood: So they have been guiltie of murder and abundance of other sinnes, and they did indeed *pray* against them, but they were never but luke-warme, they never boiled away the

blood

blood of their sins. Thou must pray *fervently*, with a seething-hot heart, if thou meanest to get *pardon* for all thy sinnes, as securitie, and deadnesse of heart, &c. And as it is *Jonah 3.* let every man crie *mightily* unto the Lord.

Seventhly and lastly, *Bie-thoughts in praier, keep praier from being importunate*; as when a man praies, and lets his heart go a wooll-garhering. I remember a storie of an unworthy Oratour, who being to make an acclamation, *O earth! O heaven!* when he said *O heaven*, he looked *down* to the earth; and when he said *O earth*, he looked *up* to heaven. So, many when they *pray* to God in heaven, their thoughts are on the earth: these praiers can never be importunate. When a man praies, the Lord looks that his heart should be *fixed* on his praier; for our hearts will *leake*, and the best child of God, do what he can, shall have bie-thoughts in praier:

And that,

First, from *corrupt nature.*

Secondly, from *nature curbed.*

Thirdly, from *Sathan.*

Fourthly, from a *mans own sluggishnesse.*

For the first; The best children of God have *corrupt natures*, and when they have done what they can, distractions will fasten on them. They would performe good duties better, if they were able, saying with Paul, *The good which I would, I do not*, &c.

Secondly, *from Nature as it is curbed*; The more grace binds nature to its good behaviour, the more ruffling it keeps. Even as a Bird being at *libertie* keeps no stir, but being in a *cage*, it flutters about, because it is abridged of its libertie: so when thou hast curbed thy corrupt flesh, it will be skittish in every good dutie thou goest about; and hence it is that the Apostle useth this phrase, viz. *I find another law in my members rebelling against the law of my mind*, &c. When grace *curbs* the law of sinne, then nature *rebels*.

Thirdly, *from Satan*; as in *Job*, Satan stands at his right hand as a *Plaintiffe*, as *Ægidius* compares it, which puts in all Cases to hinder the *Defendant*; Even so the Devil puts in all bie-thoughts that he can devise, to hinder a mans suit for going on before the throne of grace. But thou must do as *Abraham* did, when he was sacrificing;

crificing; when the birds came, he drave them away; ſo muſt thou do by thy bie-thoughts, if thou wilt have fruit of thy ſupplications before God.

Fourthly, they come from *ſpiritual ſluggiſhneſſe* that creeps on the beſt, if they take not heed: And this was the reaſon the Apoſtle cryed, *O wretched man that I am*, &c.

I ſpeak not now to the children of God, who are troubled with bie-thoughts in their praiers; For they, the more bie-thoughts they have, the more earneſt they are in praier; they *mourn*, with *David*, in their praier. Conſider ô Lord (ſaith he) how I *mourn*, Pſal. 55. There was ſomething in the Peophets praier that did *vex* him, and that made him ſo much the more to mourn before God.

But as for you that can have bie-thoughts in praier, and let them abide with you, your praiers are not importunate; the Heathen ſhall riſe up againſt you and condemn you.

I remember a ſtorie of a certain Youth, who being in the temple with *Alexander* when he was to offer incenſe to his god, and the Youth holding the golden Cenſer

with the fire in it, a coal fell on the Youths hand and burnt his wrist; but the Youth considering what a sacred thing he was about, for all he felt his wrist to be burnt, yet he would not stir, but continued still to the end.

This I speak to shame those that can let any thing, though never so small, to disturb them, yea (if it were possible) lesser things then nothing; for if nothing come to *draw* their hearts away, they *themselves* will employ their hearts. *Baals* Priests shall condemn these, who did cut themselves with knives, and all to make them *pray* so much the more stronglie. What a shame is it then, that we should come on *life and death* to pray for our souls, and yet come with such loose and lazie prajers! Think you that a malefactor when he is crying at the Bar for his life, will be thinking on his Pots and Whores, &c? Was it ever heard of, that a man at *death's*-doore, should be thinking on his Dogs? can he then think on them? Do you think that *Jonah* prayed on this fashion, when he was in the Whales belly? or the Thief on the crosse, or *Daniel* in the Lions den, or the three Children in the fierie furnace, or

Paul

Paul in prison? Do ye think that these *prayed* thus? What, shall I be at prayer, and my minde in the fields? No, no; if I will *pray*, I must *melt* before God, and bewail my sins, and be heartily affected in *prayer*. But as long as I pray thus, I pray not at all. And as God said to Adam, *where art thou?* so may he say to thee, *Man, where art thou?* art thou at *prayer*, and thy mind at *mill?* is thy mind on thy Oxen, and art thou at prayer before me? what an indignity is this? Should a man come to sue to the King, and not minde his suit? will not the King say, Do you mock me? know you to whom you speak? The Lord takes this as a hainous sin, when men come into his presence with such loose hearts.

Now seeing these things are thus, take a word of exhortation to labour for importunate Prayer.

Prayer is the art of all arts; it enables a man to all other duties, it is the art of Repentance, &c. *Samuel* confessed, if he had not had the *art* of Prayer, he could not have had the art of Preaching, 1 *Sam.* 12. 23. See the antithesis between these two words. *God forbid*; as if he should say, God forbid that I should cease to pray for

you, for then I ſhould not teach you the right way. A Miniſter can never preach to his people, that *prayes* not for his people. It is the *art* of Thankſgiving; a man cannot be thankfull, if he cannot *pray*. *Pſal.* 116. 12. It was the meanes whereby the Prophet *David* would be thankfull to God; he would *take up the cup of ſalvation, and call on the name of the Lord.* A man hath not a good ſervant, unleſſe he can *pray* for his maſter; ſee the ſtorie of *Abrahams* ſervant, *Gen.* 24. Prayer helps to perform all other good duties. How doſt thou thinke to have benefit by the *Word*, unleſſe thou be fervent in *prayer* with God to get a bleſſing upon it. We can do nothing but by begging.

Secondly, as Prayer is the *art of all arts*, ſo it is the *Compendium of all divinitie.* Therefore to *call zealouſlie* on the name of the Lord, is to be a Chriſtian; *Whoſoever ſhall call on the name of the Lord*, &c. It includes repentance, humiliation, ſorrow for ſin, joy in Gods goodnes, thankſgiving for mercies, obedience to his commandements, yea the whole durie of man; therefore we muſt labour to be importunate in prayer. A *Reaſonable* ſoul is *eminently* all

all souls; so Prayer is *eminently* all good duties. *Psal.* 72. *The prayer of David the son of Jesse*; that is, all his repentance, in all passages; he did humble himself before God; all *Davids* duties are included by the name of the *prayer* of David the son of Jesse. And therefore thou hadst need to make much of Prayer; for thou canst never *repent*, unlesse thou *pray* well.

Thirdly, *Prayer is a mans utmost reference*; a man cannot have Christ, but only by Prayer. 'Tis bad enough for a man to be a Drunkard, or to live in any other sin; but yet after all this, if a man have the *spirit* of *prayer*, there is hope of this man; if after all his sinnes committed, he can *pray* to God, there is hope. But for a man to sinne, and not to be *importunate* in *prayer*, is dangerous. What saith the Psalmist? They are corrupt and become abominable, they have not called on the name of the Lord, *Psalm* 14. 4. Oh fearfull condition!

Fourthly, *Prayer is that which Gods people have, though they have nothing else*; it is the beggers dish (as I may so call it.) A begger hath no way to live, but by begging; therefore he had need beg hard:

so we have nothing to *live* on but *praying*; I mean nothing that is to be done on our side; all the *promises* of God are to be gotten by *prayer*. Suppose a man have nothing to live on but his fingers ends, no house nor land, nothing left to maintain his wife and children, but his fingers ends; will he not be toyling all the day? he is a day-labourer, as we use to say. So, to *pray* earnestly, is a Christians fingers ends. When a house stands but upon one pillar, will not a man be fearfull and carefull of that pillar? why, Prayer is a mans pillar; if this be gone, down falls all the hope of salvation.

Fifthly, *Prayer is that which hath the command of Mercie*; we are such unprofitable servants, that Mercie will not meddle with us, unlesse it be commanded, Patience is loth to beare; we have so provoked God that Mercie is loth to make or meddle with us; for unlesse it have *command* from God, it will not admit of any soul. When *David* begged for loving kindnesse, he was *importunate*; else mercie and loving kindnesse would not look on *David*, Psal. 42.8.

Sixthly, *Prayer is Gods delight*. The supplication of the wicked is abomination to God,

God; but the prayer of the upright is his delight, *Prov.* 15. 8. The Lord must have some thing to please; Kings (you know) must be pleased; so the King of heaven would be *pleased* by all that come unto him. Now nothing is more pleasing unto him then prayer.

Seventhly, *Importunate prayer is a willing prayer.* There be many that pray to God for mercie, and yet they are loth to have it; why? because they are not *importunate.* When a mans lust runs on the world and worldly pleasures, &c. he *speeds* not. When the woman of *Canaan* was *importunate*, Christ saith unto her, *Woman, be it unto thee as thou wilt*; she had a will to grace, *Matt.* 15. 28.

Eightly, *Importunate prayer is the only faithfull prayer.* A begger never goes away from a gentlemans door, so long as he believes he shall have an alms: so, as long as a soul is *importunate* with God, it is a signe that it is a *believing* soul. O *woman*, (saith Christ) *great is thy faith.* Why? Because her *importunitie* was great, therefore Christ concludes her faith was great.

The means to get *importunitie* in prayer, are these:

First,

First, *Labour to know thine own misery.* See *Ephes.*6. 18, 19, 20. They could not have prayed importunately, unlesse they had known how it had stood with *Paul*; so unlesse thou *know* thy miserie, thou canst not be *importunate.* If a Drunkard, or Whoremaster, or Sabbath-breaker, or Swearer, &c. *knew* that they should be *damned*, they would get out of their sins.

Secondly, *You must be sensible of your miserie. Simon Magus* knew his miserie, yet because he was not *sensible* of it, he sayes, *Pray ye to the Lord for me*, Act. 8. 24. If he had been *sensible*, he would *himself* have fallen down before the congregation, and he would have confessed how he had committed that sinne in a more apprehensive manner.

Thirdly, *Observe the prayers of Gods people*, as here the disciples of Christ did; they hearing Christ pray, say unto him, *Master, teach us to pray*; they were so affected with Christs prayer, that they said, Oh that we could pray thus! Oh that we had such a spirit! *Master, teach us* to pray. So I say, consider Gods people, how they pray; they can pray as if they would *storm* up to God in supplication; they pray as if they

they would *rend* the heavens. If men did but *consider* this, it would quicken them.

Fourthly, *Get a stock of prayer.* That man must needs be rich, that hath a stock in *every market.* So if a man have a *stock* of prayer, it is a signe he is like to speed, as 1 *Cor.* 4. 2. If God did lend his ears to the Corinthians when they were crying for Paul, then certainly Pauls prayers were importunate.

Fifthly, *If thou wilt be importunate, labour to be full of good works. Qui benè operatur, benè orat*; as *Act.* 10. Cornelius his alms and prayers were come up to God: now if he had committed drunkenneſſe, *that* had come up to God with his prayer; therefore was it happy for *Cornelius* that he was full of *good works*; ſo thou canſt not be importunate, unleſſe thou be full of good works; take heed that ſwearing, and lying, &c. crie not *louder* in Gods eares then thy prayers.

Sixthly, *If thou wilt be importunate in prayer, labour to reform thy houſhold.* When *Jacob* was to call on God, he ſaid to his houſhold, Put away your ſtrange gods, *Gen.* 35.

THE

THE NECESSITIE OF GOSPEL OBEDIENCE.

In two Sermons.

BY

That laborious and faithfull Messenger of CHRIST,

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BRITISH MUSEUM

The Neceſſitie of Goſpel-Obedience.

COLOSS. I. 10.

That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing, being fruitfull unto every good work.

THere is a *double* ſenſe in theſe words:

Firſt, wherein we may not, nor cannot walk *worthy* of GOD.

And ſecondly, there is a ſenſe, wherein we may, and muſt walk worthy of Him.

The

The first sense, wherein we cannot walk worthy of God, is twofold.

1. First, *We cannot walk worthy of God, with a holiness worth of exact proportion*, for in this sense the Angels of heaven cannot walk *worthy* of God: they blesse God and praise him unceſſantly; but God is above all blessing and praise, *Nehem.9.5.* Their holinesse &c. had a beginning, but God is *infinite*. Oh then, how much lesse can we walk worthy of God!

Secondly, *We cannot walk worthy of God, with a sinlesse worth of a mortified condignitie*, so worthily as we might have done if we had not had sinne; for we are compassed with the flesh and sinne, which leads us on to all impieties. And in this respect *John* saith, *I am not worthy*, &c. *Luk.3.16.* It was no idle complement in that good man, That he was not worthy to untie Christs shoo-tyers, or to carry his books after him, as we use to speak; but it is certain, in regard of sinne which makes us unfit to do any dutie to God; God is worthy of *better* service then the best of us can performe, and to have better attendance then we can give him.

Nevertheleſſe, there is a sense wherein we

we *may* and *muſt* walk worthy of God. And this is alſo twofold:

Firſt, *quoad dignitatem non repugnantiæ*, As a niggard or a ſparing ſervant is an *unworthy* ſervant to a bountiful maſter, or a drunkard to a ſervant of God: there is a repugnancie between a maſter and ſuch a ſervant. He that will not take up his croſſe and follow me, is unworthy of me, *Mat.* 10. 37. And in this ſenſe we muſt walk worthy of God, that is, not contrary to God.

Secondly, This *worthy* includes *dignitatem condecentiæ*; Walk *worthy* of God, *i.e.* ſutable unto him. A correſpondencie there muſt be between Chriſt and thoſe that are his, between the children of God, and God; we muſt walk anſwerable to him; God is holy, gracious, mercifull, &c. now we muſt walk *worthy*, (viz.) ſutable to thoſe attributes; and not to deal baſely with God, who hath dealt bountifully with us, and hath delivered us from hell, and helps us to heaven. Let us not then put unworthy tricks on God, but let us walk as men renewed. So much for the ſenſe.

This ſpeech is directed to the profeſſors of the goſpel of Chriſt in *Coloſſe*; for firſt, *Epaphras* had given out that there were godly ſoules in that city.

Secondly, as it was reported, ſo this report came to *Paul*; he heard that there were a company of men, that went for Gods ſaints: *We have heard*, ſaith he, *&c. verſ.* 4. I *Paul* heard ſo, and hence it is that *Paul* directs his ſpeech. As if he ſhould ſay, (for ſo it is in the ninth verſe) I hear that there are profeſſors among you; Now I pray God that you walk *worthy* of God; You profeſſe Chriſt and his word, I pray God you may walk worthy of the maſter you ſerve. Hence obſerve,

Doctr. *That thoſe that profeſſe Chriſt, muſt walk worthy of Chriſt*; worthy of Chriſt whom you ſay you ſerve, or they ſerve.

This is further commanded, and that expreſly, in 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 12. That you would walk worthy of God. Think not that this is a duty left to your choiſe; no, no, ſaith the Apoſtle, you know how we have exhorted & charged you; as if he ſhould ſay, I have given many exhortations to this purpoſe, I have begged that you would do ſo, *ver.* 11. I have encouraged and comforted

forted them that have done ſo; I commanded the unwilling, and you know it, and I tell you that this is a duty of great conſequence.

Firſt, *becauſe he hath called you to be Chriſtians*; now it is a ſhame for you to be unworthy of your calling whereunto you are called. It is fit, if a man be called unto a calling, that he be worthy of it. When a wicked and an unjuſt man is preferred to be a Judge, God knowes he is a very unworthy man for that calling: A licentious Divine for a pulpit, is unworthy of that vocation. It is a ſhame a man ſhould be unworthy the calling whereunto he is called. We are called to be Chriſtians, is it not a ſhame a man ſhould be unworthy the vocation the Lord hath called him unto? I beſeech you, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Epheſ.* 4. 1. You are called to be Chriſtians by Chriſt: I beſeech you conſider this, and be worthy of this calling. Art thou a Chriſtian, and art thou not loving and kinde? Are you Chriſtians, and yet are you careleſſe and ſecure, and will you not walk as Chriſt walked? What, ſhall a man be a Chriſtian, and carry himſelf diſhoneſtly, otherwiſe then the Goſpel commands? *Reaſ.*

mands? What a shame is this?

A second ground or reason is; *The Gospel of God whereby we are called, this is a blessed calling.* The Lord Jesus tels thee what gospel is, *Luke* 4. 18. it is riches to the poor, sight to the blind, deliverance to captives, a gospel of peace and libertie &c. It hath many excellent names in Scripture. Now this is the gospel whereby you are called from being damned wretches, to be the sons of God. That man is unworthy of freedome, that is content to be a slave; he is unworthy of these blessed things which the gospel brings, that will walk in sinne still. What, will you be captives to *hell* still? will you go on in your *old* fashion still? will you live after the imaginations of your *own* hearts still, notwithstanding you are called by the gospel? Have you the gospel of a Kingdome, and will you not obey it, when it cals you to be Kings? what an unworthy thing is this, that a man should not behave himself *worthy* of the gospel whereby he is called? *Phil.* 1. 27. This is a main one, that your conversations be *worthy* of the *gospel* of God. For men to be covetous, proud, drunkards &c. still, when we have the gospel to

draw

draw us out of these sinnes; surely it is a shame, and we are unworthy of this gospel.

Thirdly, because *we are called to Repentance.* For as we are called by the gospel, so by the gospel we are called to *repentance*; therefore we must walk worthy. Is it repentance enough, to *heare* a Sermon, or do any good duty? No, no, these are not fruits *worthy* the name of repentance, *Luk.* 3. 8. I mean not worthy to be repented of, but, not worthy the name of repentance. For a man to put finger in the eie, and crie, *Lord*; is this worthy the name of *repentance*? No, no, it is other gates mourning then this. True it is, many repent, but they repent not *enough*; they must bring forth fruits *worthy* repentance.

Fourthly, because *if we walk not worthy of God, the wisdome of God will not hold us for his servants.* A master, if he be wise, will not keep a servant that will not do his businesse; if the master have cattell to be looked unto, and other businesse abroad to be done, if his servant do lie and sleep all day, or lie at the alehouse and neglect his masters businesse, sure I am, if he be but worldly-wise, he will not keep

ſuch a ſervant. In 1 *Sam.* 30, 31. an Amalekite did turn away his ſervant becauſe he was ſick; this was hard dealing: Nevertheleſſe, that man that will not walk *worthy*, that will not look to the *charge* that God hath given him, he is unworthy to be Gods ſervant. The Lord hath abundance of buſineſſe to be done; Commandments to be perform'd, Sacraments to be received, & abundance of imployment; & ſhal he hire ſervants & do his work himſelf? will any keep a dog, & bark himſelf? That man is not worthy of God, that will not do his buſines; therfore the wiſdom of God will turn us out of doors, becauſe we leave his work, and fall to wrangling within our ſelves. What diviſion is there amongſt us? what heart-burning between neighbours and neighbours? what growing cold in religion, &c? And God hath haſte of buſines to be diſpatched; why are not his Commandements regarded, his Promiſes deſired, his Judgements feared? Certainly, the Lord expects that we ſhould goe about theſe things, and wee are unworthy, if wee doe them not.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, *If we will not walk worthy of God, then 'tis for his glory to cashiere us out of his sanctuarie.* It is not for a masters credit to keep a servant that will discredit him; as to keep a whoremaster, or a sharking companion; what will honest men think? Is not he naught himself, that keeps such shag-rags about him? All the dishonour lies on the master. So it is not for the honour of God, to suffer such to be within the company of professors of his Name, that dishonour his Name, and cause the gospel of God to be blasphemed by them that are without. So soon as *Elishai* his servant had abused him, he sent him packing, *He went forth from his presence,* &c. 2 *King.* 5. 27. He should stay no longer with him; why? because he had dishonoured him; and what might *Naaman* think? Will he now have something? and even now he would have nothing; he hath soon repented him of his kindnes. Though *Naaman* did not argue thus, yet thus he might, and, for ought we know, such thoughts he had; but howsoever, *Gehazi* greatly dishonoured his master, and therefore his master sent him out of his presence. Even so, if we walk not

worthy of God, he will turn us out of doors.

Note. You that be the servants of God, and be taken with a Lie, undermining one another, or that live uncharitably one with another; this is a dishonour to God, this is not to walk worthy of God: no, it is to disgrace the Gospel, and to cast aspersions on it. Therefore as it concerns the glory of God, so we ought to walk worthy of God. What may the world think, if Professors walk loosely, and be taken tripping? what will the world say? *God keep me from being a* Puritan; *I had rather be a* Papist: and thus the name of Christ comes to be blasphemed for your sakes. These say, Come, come, I warrant you for all this, yet he will *lie* for a need, though he say *Yea verily*. And thus Religion and the gospel of Christ is called into question by the men of this world, even for your sakes that walk not worthy of God; nay, by reason of this, God cannot hire servants to do his work. Beloved, God hath sent us out to hire servants; now many would come in willingly, but because they see & think that those that professe the name of Christ be dissemblers, Puritans, and hypocrites;

crites; and therefore they ſay as ſometimes the *Indians* did of the *Spaniards*, If theſe men be the ſervants of Chriſt, I will never be his ſervant; So, if theſe men be the ſervants of God, Lord bleſſe me from them. What a damned thing is this?

Sixthly, *If we walk not worthy of God, we put great indignity upon him.* A worthy man cannot abide to meddle with unworthy things; and ſhall a Chriſtian ſerve God after an unworthy faſhion? No maſter, either in heaven, earth or hell, will have a ſervant unworthy of him; and this is the reaſon why men ſweare, and lie, and live like devils incarnate, becauſe the Devil will have them worthy of hell. So the world lets men cozen and diſſemble, for no other cauſe but becauſe the world will have them worthy of the world. So that all maſters, whether the world, the fleſh, or the devil, look that their ſervants ſhould be worthy of them; and do you then think that the Lord will not have his ſervants walk worthy of him? *Be not deceived, God is not mocked*, Gal. 6. 7. Doſt thou come into his houſe, heare his Word, and wilt thou not obey it? Comeſt thou to *Note.*

to a Sacrament, and haſt thou drinking, carding and dicing, at home? Thou goeſt under the name of a good Chriſtian, yet thou liveſt in thy ſins, having a *ſecret* luſt, either to ſweare, or lie, or to commit adulterie. Take heed, I ſay, God will not be mocked. For men to go in the name of Gods children, and yet not to ſerve & obey him, this is to make a mockery of God; but God will not be mocked.

Oh, ſaith one, my Father will never like it, if I be ſo ſtrict and preciſe; and as for my Mother, ſhe cannot abide a Puritan. Another ſaith, I cannot keep my children unleſſe I put my money to uſe, &c. But what ſaith Chriſt? *He that loveth father or mother*, &c. *more then me, is not worthy of me*, Mat. 10.37. Doſt thou argue on this faſhion, and yet hopeſt to be a Chriſtian? Doſt thou plead *ſelf-reſpect*, and doſt thou hope to go for a Chriſtian? what a mockerie is this? nature abhorrs it.

I remember a ſtorie of a Boy, who being at *Lyons*, and ſaw two men, one tall, and he had a ſhort cloak, the other ſhort, and he had a long cloak; and thought it very unſeemly; ſo he took the long cloak and put it on the tall mans back, and the

ſhort

cloak on the ſhort mans back, and then it liked him. So, is it ſeemly that any of us ſhould weare the long robes of Chriſtianitie; and yet be ſhort in Obedience? that we ſhould go for the people of God, and not behave our ſelves ſutably?

In this place there is no room for Papiſts to eſtabliſh merit for themſelves; the Apoſtle intends no ſuch matter in this place; for we are not our own men, and therefore cannot merit. We are taught to pray, *Give us this day our daily bread*; we have not one bit of bread but we muſt *beg* it; and when we have done all we can, (as who doth?) yet we are but unprofitable ſervants. But ſuppoſe we could merit all righteouſneſſe; yet all our ability is from God. Again, ſuppoſe we be righteous, what is that to him? if we be holy, what is that to him? If we be damned, he is never the worſe; if we be ſaved, he is not the better; if we keep all his commandements, yet it is his mercy to ſave us. He ſhews mercy to thouſands; to whom? not to them that ſin, but to them that love me and keep my commandements, *Exod.* 20.6. To one that keeps Gods commandements, it is his love to ſave him, it is his

love

love that he hath mercy on him. The Church of *Rome* do talk much of their well-doing; but in the mean while what becomes of their ſins? they ſhould go and ſuffer for their ſins, and then come and talk of merit; Do they talk of merit before they have ſatisfied for their ſinnes? the Law will be ſatisfied firſt; and when they have endured hell-fire world without end, then let them talk of merit. The Lord doth not mean that we muſt walk worthy ſo as to *merit* any thing: for ſuppoſe that all the ſufferings of this life, and all the torments of the world that all the Saints of God have ſuffered, were put on one man, and he to endure them all; yet they are not worthy the glory that ſhalbe revealed *Rom.*8.18. Here then is no room for Papiſts merits. Yet we muſt walk worthy of God with ſutableneſſe; and if we do not ſo, the Lord will not owne us. You know the ſtory of the gueſts in the Goſpel, and how they were invited to the ſupper; one pretended one thing, another another thing; one had married a wife, he could not come, yet ſure I am he might have brought her with him: another had bought oxen, &c. But what followes in the text,

Mat.

Mat. 22. Those that were bidden were not worthy, therefore they shall not taste of my supper. So some say for their sinnes, it is their nature, or one occasion or other puts them off, they could not come. None that are *unworthy* of God, shall taste of the mercy of God, neither in the pardon of their sins, nor salvation: no, you get not so much as a taste of Christ, if you walk not worthy of the gospel of Christ.

The truth of this will appeare in the Use, if we consider what this *worthy walking* is.

First, *We must be as it were even the very nature of God*; we should, as *Peter* speaks, shew forth the vertue of him that hath called us, that we may shew what a glorious God, what a blessed Redeemer, and righteous Judge we have, and admire his goodnesse that hath called us out of darknesse into this glorious light; and we must be holy as he is holy, 1 Pet. 1. 15. How doth this sute with the nature of God, when we walk not worthy of God? God is *just*, 2 Cor. 1. 3. how unworthy then are we that are *cruel*, *unmerciful*, and *unjust*? God is a God of *peace*, 1 Cor. 14. 22. how unworthy then are we of him, that

1 Use.

that live in *heart-burning* one with another? We are the image of God, if we please him, 1 *Cor.* 11. 7. What a shame, dishonour, and wrong then is it to God, that we should have his image, and yet be nothing like him? Should a glorious King see a deformed picture of himself, surely he would make that man smoke that pictured him so: And shall we go for the image of God, the God of all glory, and shall we be vile and unclean, negligent and careless, and yet go for Gods picture? what do we make of God? will not God be angry, and will not his wrath burn like fire? What, am I a drunkard, a whoremaster, &c. is this my picture? Sure I am God cannot endure this.

Secondly, *consider the relation we have with God*; we are the *children* of God, we are the begotten of the Father: doth God beget monsters? doth God beget such children? We professe our selves *servants* to God, the ground of that relation is, that we are at Gods *command*: did God command us to do the duties of Religion thus? No, no, beloved; if we be *servants*, we must be at *his* command. We professe our selves *sheep of his pasture*; but do we

live

live as if we fed on his Commandements? Is this to live worthy the commons that Christ hath put us in, which is such rich food of salvation? How unworthy is this? *If I be a father, where is mine honour? If I be a master, where is my feare?* Mal. 1. 6. Is not this rather to dishonour God, that a childe should have a worthy man to his father, and be a lout himself? what indignity is this that we put on God? Let us examine our selves whether we walk *worthy* of God, or no. I speak to the *professors* of the gospel; for it is certain, that they that professe it not, are unworthy; you that are yet in the gall of bitternesse, and in the bond of iniquitie, are not worthy.

For first, *Christianitie is a trade.* What profession soever thou art of, that is thy trade: will a man say to a Physitian, what, cannot you keep your Physick to your self? must you needs make profession of it? Or will a man go to a shoo-maker and say, Cannot you keep your shooes and trade to your self? So Christianitie is a Profession, and thou art unworthy of it unlesse thou professe it.

Secondly,

Secondly, To what end is a trade? it will do a man no good unlesse he professe it; Every man in his calling lives on his calling; then, if he live by it, he must walk *worthy* of it. A Lawyer may die for all his calling, if he professe it not; Dost thou walk in no calling nor profession? Undoubtedly, thou wilt get no living by it.

Thirdly, *Christianitie is an Order.* If a man be a Papist, yet he cannot be a *Franciscan*, unlesse he professe himself to be of that Order. So if we be Christians, Christ is the father of that order. *Jesus Christ the High-priest of our profession*, Heb. 3. 1. he is the Father of all Christianitie, and thou canst not be a Christian, unlesse thou professe that Order. *Let your light so shine &c.* saith our Saviour, or else you walk not worthy of God: I speak this to those that *professe* Christ; for a man may professe a trade, and yet not walk worthy of it.

For first, *If we walk worthy of God, then our labours answer all the cost God hath been at.* That ground is unworthy tillage, that will not pay the cost that is bestowed on it; that Scholler is not worthy to be maintained

tained, that doth not answer the cost of his Parents. So, my beloved, if you walk *worthy* of God, answer the charges that God hath been at with you. It hath cost God his *Son* to redeem you, and what are you the better? The work of his Spirit comes to enlighten us; the labour of his Ministers to teach us: Now what are we the better for all this? It hath cost God abundance of *Mercie* to allure us, abundance of *Judgement* to terrifie us, many *Corrections*, and above all he is *patient* to beare with us; and this is a mercie of mercies. A man will shew *all* he hath, before he shew his *patience*; a man may shew himself *kind*, and if he be much wronged, he will say, *What, will you try my patience?* I tell thee, God hath suffered his *patience* to be tyred by us a long time, and he hath been at a great deal of cost with us; but have we answered it? if we have not, we are *unworthy* of God. God hath been at a great deal of cost to make you love one another, and shall there be heart-burning still? Good ground brings forth good herbs meet for use, not only herbs, but *meet* herbs: so if you be good children to God, you will bring forth fruit *meet* for

God; otherwise, if God have been at all this cost, and you secure, and strangers still one from another, and never the better, you are neer unto cursing, your labour is not to profit in the Word, and so you answer not God the cost that he hath been at with you. I fear me, God will remove his candlestick, or if he continue it, you shall have hardnesse of heart with it: For since those rents have been, how hath the number of believers decreased? when was one converted? when was a whoremaster or a drunkard renewed, unlesse it be to take a higher degree in sin? No, no, the Gospel hath done child-bearing; and surely this is the cause; We walk not *worthy* of it.

Secondly, *If we walk worthy of God, then we walk with God in white.* I have a few names, &c. *Rev.* 3. 4. for they are worthy, &c. *In white*, (i. e.) in true love and holinesse, with white robes of puritie, clothed with the righteousnesse of Christ: but if you be of the black qualities of the *world*, you walk not *worthy*, you edifie not your selves, nor others; this kind of walking is for the men of the world, 'tis for them to stand at a stay in religion; 'tis for

for them to hear and not to practise; these are black qualities; but if you walk *aright*, you walk with me in *white*, saith God; those that walk aloof, walk unworthy, like base Rogues who are not admitted into the Kings presence.

Thirdly, *If we walk worthy of God, we do not disappoint Gods account.* God accounts us sincere and undefiled, as a Virgin unspotted pure in heart; Such as are renewed, the Lord calls all that are his children by this name. Now if you walk so, as the world may tax you for pride, covetousnesse, hatred, or *any* other vice; this is not to walk *worthy* of God, but to disparage Gods account; God counts you righteous, and the world censures you, and sayes you are not, and that because of your ill carriage, and so Gods judgement seems not to be right. *They that shall be counted worthy*, &c. *Luk.* 20.35. they that enjoy Gods glory, are counted *worthy*; God counts them worthy, Christ counts them worthy, conscience and the world counts them worthy: but do you think that the wicked shall say at the last day that they were *worthy*? No, no, this were a disparagement to God.

Fourthly, *If we walk worthy of God, then we are importunate beggers*; that begger that will not beg hard, is unworthy of an alms; so we are unworthy of mercie, if we beg not hard for it: *Watch therefore and pray alway, that you may be counted worthy*, &c. Luk. 21. 36.

Fifthly, *If we walk worthy of God, then we adde humiliation to every dutie we doe to God.* It is true, all our prayers are not accepted, unlesse they be worthy; our receiving the Sacrament is cursed in Gods sight, unlesse it be done worthily; but yet not as if there were any *inherent* righteousnes in man; no, no. *Luk. 6. 6. I am not worthy*, that is, I think not my self worthy. Here is the worthines of all our wages, if we pray in faith, and adde humiliation to our prayers; we must obey God, and adde *humiliation* thereunto; we must adde unto every good duty humiliation; so that if we be *worthy*, we are the *more humbled.* This is a dutie of great moment; it is such a dutie, as if we walk not worthy of God in humiliation, we are not capable of the gospel, nor pardon of sinne, if we be not content to be ruled by Christ. If the house be worthy, let your peace abide upon

upon it, *Mat.* 10. 11. The peace of Gods Ministers is peace to the conscience; and the conscience is at peace, if sinne be pardoned: So that if *this place*, this congregation, be not worthy that they should have pardon of sin preached, they are not *capable* of it. The world must be pulled down, self-will and self-luft must be lamed and mortified, to do as the Lord will have it; that man is not capable of the gospel, that will not be ruled by it.

In the second place, let us consider, *If we walk not worthy of God, we walk worthy of somewhat else*; if not of God, then of hell, vengeance, and condemnation: Let us assure our selves, of whatsoever we walk worthy, that we shall have. I speak not of worth of *proportion*. Let a man be ignorant, if he be thought worthy of hell, then to hell he shall go; none shall go to hell, but those that are unworthy of heaven; and none shall go to heaven, but those that have the tokens of heaven about them. Fill her with blood (saith God) *Rev.* 15. 6. as she was worthy of *blood*, so God would give her blood her belly-full; so when men walk on in their sinfull courses, as they are worthy, so shall they have.

Secondly, *You are guilty of Chriſt, if you walk not worthy of Chriſt:* It is a damnable thing for a man to be thought or found guilty of perjurie; but to be thought or found guilty of Chriſt, this is the greateſt of all. Beloved, you are guilty of Chriſt, if you walk not worthy of Chriſt: ſee it in one branch of a Chriſtians walk. If a man receive the *Sacrament* unworthily, he is *guilty* of Chriſt, 1 Cor. 11.27. If a man walk unworthily in any one dutie, he is guilty of Chriſt, and the death of Chriſt ſhall be laid upon him: Oh, what then will become of them who walk unworthily in all the duties of Chriſtianitie? *Judas* betrayed Chriſt, and thou art guilty; *Pilate* condemned him, and thou art guilty; ſo &c. His blood lies on thy ſoul, and thou ſhalt anſwer for it, if thou get not into Chriſt. Thus you ſee, if we walk not worthy in one dutie, we are guilty of all.

Thirdly, *If you walk not worthy of Chriſt, you ſhall be condemned*; the ſentence of condemnation is on you for ever. *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh his own damnation*; and this is but one branch. So he that *prayes*, or *profeſſeth*

feſſeth the name of Chriſt unworthily, what ever duty it be, if a man labour not to do it ſutable to God, it is his *damnation.* That priſoner is unworthy of a pardon, that will not ſtand to the conditions of his pardon, and be ruled by the Judge. Even ſo, you that will not walk holily according to the *conditions* of the goſpel, you are not worthy of pardon, and you ſhall never enjoy it; for the Lord knows beforehand who are *worthy* walkers before him. Hath God children here, and vvould they be ſo accounted? Let them vvalk *worthy* of God, let their light ſhine, &c. let them labour to quit the coſt that God hath been at; vvalk vvith Chriſt in *all* thy vvaies, for this is to vvalk vvorthy of God in all pleaſing. *Let this ſuffice for Exhortation.*

THE NECESSITIE OF GOSPEL OBEDIENCE.

The second Sermon.

B.Y

That laborious and faithfull Messenger of CHRIST,

WILLIAM FENNER, Sometimes Fellow of *Pembroke Hall* in *Cambridge*, and late Minister of *Rochford* in *Essex*.

BRITISH MUSEUM

The Necessitie of Gospel-Obedience.

Colos. 1. 10.

That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitfull unto every good work.

THe Apostle having delivered unto us the sundry duties of *walking worthy of God*, concerning which we have spoken; he comes now to *amplifie* it, and that he doth these *two* wayes. First *generally*, unto all pleasing; Secondly *particularly*, in the sundry duties wherein we are to please God; namely, to *walk worthy*,

worthy, and then to be *fruitfull* in *every* good work, and increaſing in the knowledge of God unto all pleaſing (as it is in the Original.)

Some would have *all pleaſing* to be meant of pleaſing all men; but this were a ſin; for if a man will be a *man-pleaſer*, he cannot pleaſe God. What then doth the Apoſtle exhort us unto? to ſin? God forbid. Would he have us ſtrive to pleaſe all men? this were but flatterie: No, no, there is no ſuch matter in the Original; it is not the *adjective*, in all pleaſing, that is, pleaſing to all: but in the *ſubſtantive*, unto all-pleaſing, that is, unto all manner of pleaſing: Labour to walk ſo accordingto the goſpel, being directed in all your wayes according to the light thereof, that ſo you may pleaſe God in all things. It hath reference to the walking worthy of the Lord, that is, in all manner of pleaſing to the Lord. And this is not *impoſſible*;

Firſt, becauſe *God is not a rigorous God*, but kind, loving and amiable, full of compaſſion and kindneſſe, a God eaſie to pleaſe. There be ſome men that a man cannot pleaſe, they are ſo captious, and ſo ful of exceptions, and ſo humorous, that a man can never

never pleaſe them; but God is a kinde God, full of compaſſion, abundant in goodneſſe and truth, and therefore 'tis poſſible for a man to pleaſe God. True it is, if God ſhould require obedience in rigour, holineſſe in rigour, &c. if he ſhould do thus, then it were impoſſible to pleaſe him, then he muſt have othergates ſervants then we; but the Lord deals in eaſie terms, he demands obedience according to the goſpel: *When a mans wayes pleaſe the Lord*, ſaith the wiſe man, *Prov.* 16.7. where we may note, that it is *poſſible* for a man ſo to walk, as that his wayes may pleaſe God.

Secondly, *as God is not a riggrous God, ſo there is a way to walk wherein we may pleaſe him, and that is the way of ſincere walking.* It was Gods advice to *Abraham Gen.* 17.1. We muſt be faithfull in our calling: ſee it in *David*; *I will magnifie God with thanksgiving, and this alſo ſhall pleaſe the Lord, &c.* Pſal. 69.31. To be thankfull and to obey his commandement is the way to pleaſe God.

Thirdly, *the Lord hath ſhewed us this way*; he might have been at choice whether he would have told us what would be

be pleasing in his sight or no; he might have left that for us to have studied out, or else he might have sent us to hell for our ignorance in it; he might have chosen whether he would have come and taught us our horne-book or no. Like as a Master once in a comedy, when his servant could not please him, saith the servant, pray Master tell me what I shall doe to please you; nay saith the Master, Sirrah, look you to that; so God might have made us look to that our selves, and that most justly too, but here appeares the *love* of God, as there is a *way*, so he hath *shewed* us this way, saying *this is my beloved sonne, heare him. Mat.* 12.3. As if he should say, goe to my sonne, he will tell you what you shall doe to please me, for in him I am well pleased; he doth not say *with him*, though that had been true, yet but halfe the meaning; but *in him*; get to him, be governed by him, be ingrafted into him, this is the course you are to take to please me; this is my beloved.

Lastly, as God hath shewed us this way, so there be some that have walked in this way before us. The children of God, in all ages have laboured to *please* God,

and

and that as a child laboureth to please his Father *Heb.* 11. 5.

Thus you see it is *possible* to please God.

Secondly, *as it is possible, so likewise it is a fit duty*, it is very fit we should all labour to please God.

For first, *God is a great King*; now great ones you know looke to be pleased; a man cannot speake to a great man without he say *and if it shall please you. Esther.* 1. 19. If it please the King, &c. such as have *greatnesse*, looke for this stile; and it is fit it should be so, that greatnesse should have the companions of it, which is to be *pleased*. Now who is so great as God? And therefore 'tis fit his servants should *please* him.

Secondly, as God is a great God, so his pleasure is a good pleasure, *ergo* it is fit hee should bee pleased; hence it is called the good pleasure of his will, *Ephes.* 1. 5. Look what ever Gods pleasure is, 'tis alwayes good, *ergo* it is fit hee should be pleased, because it is alwayes agreeable to reason; 'tis not alwayes fit we should please men, for they are wicked many times in their desires. See it in *Ahashuerus*;

rus; his pleaſure was one while utterly to extirpate the Jews, It was *Darius* pleaſure to ſeal an idolatrous Decree, it was *Pharohs* pleaſure to ſet hard tasks on Gods people, and *Herods* pleaſure was to put *James* to death, and it pleaſed the Jewes too; thus you ſee all their pleaſures were wicked; nay, all men, their pleaſures are not always good, and therefore not fit at *all* times to pleaſe them; but God is alwayes good, and therefore it ſtands with equity that he ſhould alwayes be pleaſed.

Fourthly, *if we will not, our betters will*, and therefore it is fit we ſhould; Chriſt was and is our *better*, and he did thoſe things which pleaſed God, *John* 8. 29. The Angels of heaven think it fit, they bleſſe the Lord, and they alſo are our *betters*, ſee *Pſal.* 103. 21. If theſe think it fit to pleaſe God, it is much more fit that we ſhould ſerve and pleaſe him. We argue thus, Will you not do as I bid you? your betters will: ſo then you ſee they are our betters that will pleaſe God.

Fifthly, *it is moſt ſutable with our conſcience that we ſhould do ſo*; for if wee ſhould not *pleaſe* God, our conſciences would find fault with it. If our conſcien-

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ces condemne us not, &c. *John* 3. 21. then we doe those things that are pleasing in his sight; the pleasing of God is set down as a pleasing thing to our consciences; and can we desire a more fit duty then that which our own selves will charge us with rebellion if we be not conformable unto it? such is the pleasing of God; it is *naturally* in the conscience of all men that God is to be pleased; how often read we in heathen books, *if it please God?* and it is a common phrase in most mens mouths, and therefore a fit duty.

Sixthly, *it is a duty most suitable with humane society*; if all men would labour to please God, there would be no hatred, no tale-bearing, no falling out; Oh what a blessed life might we lead if we would labour to please God? this is the true ground of all good fellowship: But what was the reason the Jewes were contrary to all men? It was this, because they did not please God, 1 *Thes.* 2. 15. when every one pleaseth himself in his lusts and desires, then there must needs be a contrariety among men; for one mans will is *contrary* to anothers; one will have this, another that; but if all would referre their will to Gods

will, and agree in one, there would be no contrariety among men.

Thirdly, *as it is a possible and a fit duty, so it is a large duty*; it runs along as Expositors observe, in all our thoughts, words and deeds. It must be at *all* times and in all places, and in all regards. It is I say a large duty, and I will shew it in five things.

First, *it is the end of all our duties*; what duty is there for a Christian to undertake, but he is to please God in it? why do we hear, pray, receive the Sacrament, beleeve, repent, suffer injuries for Christs sake, but that we may please God? why must children obey their parents, but that they may therein please God? I can go about no duty, but if I mean to do it aright, I must propound this end, that I may please God.

Secondly, *it is large in that it is the most acceptable of all duties*; and indeed it is the forme and life of all performances; prayer is abomination to God, unlesse we please God in that action; the pleasing of God is that which puts life in that duty which we undertake, *Philip.* 4. 19. the Apostle combines these two, *acceptable* and

well

well-pleasing; and they cannot well bee separate; if any Sacrifice be well-pleasing, it must needs be acceptable unto God; therefore it is pleasing, because it makes every duty acceptable.

Thirdly, *it is large, in that it is unconfinable to place or time*, we must not only be godly at Church, but at home also; not only faire carriaged in the company of the godly, but we must be holy in all companies, please God in all places; we must labour to please him *where soever* we are; it is a duty not conscribed to any place; shall a man please God at a Sermon and displease him abroad by drunkennesse and whoring, &c? shall we think to please God in such a place where we cannot for shame breake out into unsavory speeches, and at another time, and in another place endure any ungodlinesse? this is not to please God, but rather the contrary. No, no; it is not limited to *time*, nor *place*; we must *please* God not onely in prayer time, but also when prayer is ended; not in Sermon time only, but when the Sermon is ended also. Labour therefore to please God at *all* times; not on Sundayes only, but on the week dayes also; many will read on

the Sabbath, but never else; but this is a duty to be performed at *all* times; 'tis not as hearing, that cannot be performed alwayes: no, it is a generall duty, like *Aristotles* Universals: and *Psal.* 116. 5. I will walk before the Lord, &c. *Placebo Dominum*, I will please the Lord in the land of the living. This contains the summe of all Religion.

The largenesse of it appears in this, that it is in all things: 'tis larger then the servants duty to please their masters; yet servants must labour to please their masters in all things, 2 *Tit.* 9. 9. But if servants must please their masters in all things, then how can the duty of pleasing God be larger?

Obj.

Sol. True it is, servants must please their masters in all things, *(i.e.)* in all that are commanded of God; otherwise they may not, for when the thing is forbidden by God, 'tis nothing but the privation of the thing. Sinnes are *privations*: an Idol is nothing; all sinnes are as idols, they are nothing; 'tis not an *action*, but the *privation* of the image of God that should be there, and of agreeablenesse to the Word in all things that are not contrary to the Word: the duty of pleasing man must be bounded within

within another, but we must please God without limitation.

Fifthly, *It is large, in that it is an everlasting duty*; it shall be a duty, when other duties cease. Prayer, belief, repentance, weeping and mourning, &c. must cease, when Gods children come to heaven; they must pray no more, fast no more; no, these duties must cease; but this is & must be a duty when they are dead and gone, it is an everlasting duty, it is that which we must carry to our graves, yea into another world with us. It is the fruit of all other duties; we are tryed by prayer and hearing, &c. as by apprentiship, that so we may learn this art of *well-pleasing* God; if we have not learned this art, we are not capable of entring into life, so that in some sense it is above the commandements: we will keep the commandements, that we may please God; this is the crown of all our obedience, not as if it could be more, but the pleasing of God in these is the upshot of all our obedience to God.

Sixthly, *It is large, in that it is the whole duty of the new man*; only new men in Christ can please God, unregenerate men cannot please God; let them give alms,

&c. yet if they be not *new creatures*, they cannot pleaſe God; let them do actions, though never ſo good for *manner* or *meaning*, yet they are worthleſſe in the hand of an unregenerate man. *They that are in the fleſh cannot pleaſe God*, Rom. 8. 8. He ſpeakes not of ſuch as are *married*; for *Zacharie* and *Elizabeth* were married, and they pleaſed God: but thoſe that *walk* after the fleſh as unregenerate, unſanctified, unpurified, ſuch as live in ſin, none of theſe can ever pleaſe God. Thus you ſee it is the whole duety of the new man.

Fourthly, *as it is poſſible, fit, and large, ſo it is a neceſſary duty.* The Apoſtle ſets a *muſt*, and an *ought* upon it, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 2. It muſt be done, there is a *neceſſity* laid upon it. It muſt be done.

For firſt, *we have no ſaving grace, unleſſe we labour to pleaſe God*; it comes from Gods good pleaſure, and it goes to Gods good pleaſure. God is well pleaſed in his image, and grace is the image of God: Now when, if a man pleaſe not God, it is becauſe he hath no grace: Thou thinkeſt Chriſt did die for thee, thou thinkeſt a lie, why? thou haſt no ſaving grace. *Let us have grace*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that we may*

ſerve

serve God, Heb. 12. as if he should say, without grace it is impossible to please him: therefore you see it is very necessary to please God, 'tis as necessary as grace, and without it we are damned.

Secondly, *If we do not please God, we may see what a woful case we are in*; if God be not pleased to spare us, we cannot be saved. Now a man will be sure to please that man that can hang him if he please; he will not pull his displeasure upon him. *Acts* 12. when *Herod* was displeased, they laboured to turn away his displeasure, and made friends; so we depend on God, and therefore our souls, bodies, and everlasting happiness or destruction depends on God; and if he be not pleased, what benefit can we wretches expect? Wouldest thou have mercy, and wilt thou not please God? thou shalt be deceived. Because *Hester* pleased the King, he shewed her kindness; and God will never shew us kindness, unless we please him. There is no man so mad, to heap good turnes upon a mans head that will not please him; how can we have the good pleasure of God, when we will not seek to please God? Before *Enoch* was translated, it was said

he pleased God, Heb. 11. 5. God would never have brought him to heaven, if he had not been pleased with him. So before he *translates* thee from earth to heaven, before he delivers thee from damnation, thou must be sure to please God.

Thirdly, *if we labour not to please God, God knowes what infinite danger we are ever in*; in the morning he may brain us, or wee may die and perish in our sleep, or in any action; God knowes what mischeif may befall us if we please not God. If a man prove a Traitour to the King, God knowes what the King will do unto him; the wrath of a King is as the roaring of a Lion; Oh then what is the displeasure of the judge both of quick and dead? If God be displeased with us, God knowes what will become of us, we cannot eat a meales meat safely, wee may be choakt for ought we know; we cannot be secure one moment; It may be this is the moment he meanes to disgrace thee, to lay rottennesse on thy heart: It may be he will lay the curse of heaven upon thee before thou goe home and be no more seen; but if thou please God *Eccles.* 9. 7. come what can come,

no-

nothing can come amiſſe to them that pleaſeth the Lord but if they *pleaſe* not the Lord, thou liveſt in a damnable condition.

Is it ſo that the duty of pleaſing God is ſo poſſible, fit, large, and neceſſary? here then three ſorts of men are condemned,

Firſt thoſe that pleaſe not God. Do you thinke then that this is pleaſing to God that there ſhould be ſo many Ale-houſes in the Towne, or in any ſuch place as this where the Goſpel hath been ſo long taught, that there ſhould be ſo many prophane Eſaues which walke after the ſtubbornneſſe of their owne hearts? Do you think that it is pleaſing to God that you ſhould think hardly of them that think beſt of the Word? Think you, is it beſt pleaſing to God, that you ſhould have *inordinate* courſes in your families, that after ſo much preaching, yet many of you ſhould be ſtill in your ſinnes? Is this pleaſing to God? Oh conſider what you pull upon your ſelves, viz. *wrath*, yea wrath to the utmoſt. It is a grievous thing for a man to pull the wrath of a King upon him; You ſhall not do this on pain of *our* diſ-

pleaſure.

pleasure. Do then, if you dare. If the wrath of a [illegible] then be so great, and so to be feared; what then is the wrath (and that to the utmost) of the *everliving God*? Destruction and damnation to the *utmost*; God will shew no mercy to them that make no conscience to please him.

Secondly, *this condemns those that please men*. If it be so necessary to please God, what will then become of men-pleasers, as such there are, and too too many amongst us, that carry tales, &c.? why? because they will *please* such and such men. Such are many of your children and servants in Alehouses, that can fill pot after pot, and that because it is their masters pleasure that it should be so: But what will become of this in the end? *If I should please men, &c.* Gal. 1. 10. If not the servant of God or of Christ, then I must needs be the servant of the Devil. I, even I *Paul*, if I should seek to please men, I were none of the servants of Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, *this also condemns those that please themselves*. Many there are that are self-pleasers, which walk after their self-wils, self-conceits, self-desires, and self-affections.

affections. It is pleasing to them to drink, to swagger, to dice and to card; It is pleasing to them to shuffle over the ordinances of God; why? because they have other things to do. Oh think, I beseech you, what a grievous evil you pull on your heads, that are *self-pleasers*; You draw down upon you more then swift damnation. How can that be, will you say? Yes, a man may pull down more then naked damnation; *double* damnation is more then *single*; now if you please your selves, live as you list, do as you list, you pull on your selves damnation with a mischiefe. God will reserve all the wicked for the day of judgement to punish them, 2 *Pet.*2.9. but chiefly them that are *self-pleasers*, unto whom he gives special marks; as first, *unclean persons*; 2. such as *rebell against God*; 3. *Presumptuous*, such as build castles in the aire (as we use to say) on Gods mercy; 4. He reckons the *self-willed*, in the Original *self-pleasers* (i.e.) when a man follows his own will and pleasure. These are they that God will *chiefly* cast into *damnation*: this is to pull damnation, and more then damnation upon thee. *And thus, by Gods assistance, you have seen the prosecution of this Point.*

2 AU 58

A CAVEAT AGAINST LATE REPENTANCE.

In a SERMON

BY

That laborious and faithfull Messenger of CHRIST,

WILLIAM FENNER, Sometimes Fellow of *Pembroke Hall* in *Cambridge*, and late Minister of *Rochford* in *Essex*.

A

CAVEAT

AGAINST LATE

REPENTANCE

A CAVEAT
against
Late Repentance.

LUKE 23. 24.

And he said unto Jesus, Lord remember me when thou commest into thy kingdome.

THis is spoken from the good Thief on the Crosse, *And he said unto*, &c. *Extraordinary* cases never make a *common* rule: The ordinary rule is this, As is a mans life, so is his death. 'Tis a common axiome, and it is as true as common, *Qualis vita, finis ita*; a good life cannot choose but have a good death,

death, and a wicked life a curſed end: this is the *ordinary* rule.

Nevertheleſſe there are *extraordinary* caſes wherein it may be otherwiſe, and theſe caſes are referred to four heads.

Firſt, *when it pleaſeth God to ſhew his prerogative royall*, he may convert a man at the laſt gaſpe, and give unto the laſt even as unto the firſt, *Mat.* 20. 13. his grace is his owne, Chriſt his owne, Heaven is his owne, and he may doe with his owne as he will; this is Gods *prerogative*; as a King may pardon an old beaten Traitor, and thereby ſhew his prerogative: but this is not *ordinary*.

Secondly, *when a ſinner hath not had meanes of ſalvation in this life, but only at his death*; as when S. *Paul* came unto *Corinth*, many were there lying on their death-beds, S. *Paul* converted ſome of them, 1 *Cor.* 15, 29. Alas, they were Pagans before, they never had the means of ſalvation before; yet ſo it pleaſeth the Lord ſometimes to ſtep in and convert a ſinner that never had the *meanes* before: but this caſe is not ordinary neither, for now we have the means and health.

Thirdly, *when it comes to paſſe that a*

ſinner

ſinner is made an example to all the world, as when a theef is brought to the gallows, & the Lord converts him: And for ought we know, this was the caſe of *Achan*, Joſ. 7. 25. he was converted perhaps, when the ſtones flew about his eares.

Another extraordinary caſe is, *when the Lord may be as much honoured by a mans death, as he hath been diſhonoured by his life.* In ſuch a caſe ſome live, and it pleaſeth the Lord to giue repentance unto life: And this was the caſe of this Thief; he did as much *honour* God at his death, (as you ſhall ſee in his repentance) as many whoſe *liues* were ſpent in all holineſſe.

The priuiledges of a few men make no common rule; men deal with repentance (as a Diuine ſpeaks) as they do with their Wills, they put them off to the laſt gaſp; ſo they put off repentance to the laſt hour, like *Achitophel*, that never ſet his houſe in order till he went and hanged himſelf. As it is ſaid of the ſerpent, it growes crooked all the dayes of his life, and when it dies then it ſtraightens it ſelfe: So many walke perverſly while they are well, and then to ſtraighten all, cry God mercy when they are a dying, as the heart of

oak, that never growes soft till it is dead and rotten; so they never soften their hearts with repentance, till they see they must die, and then they fall to their beads and say, Was not the Thief converted at the last? and did not the Thief on the crosse find forgivenesse? and why then may not I? Thus they bear themselves on the example of the Thiefs conversion. I dare be bold to say, that this Thief never stole more goods in his life, then his example hath stollen souls from heaven after his death. Therefore I have chosen this Text, to let you all know that the repentance of this Thief was no *ordinary* thing, nay, to us an *extraordinary wonder*, and therefore there is no trusting to it; For, for a man to be careless while he is well, hoping to speed with repentance at the last, is vain.

Now that this his repentance was *extraordinary*, I prove it by *five* arguments.

First, *because it was one of the wonders of Christs passion:* now Christs passion was full of wonders, and they were of two sorts, *Corporall* and *Spirituall*.

The first wonder was in the *heavens*, the Sun was ecclipsed, the Moon then being

ing at the full, which is a miracle in nature. To ſhew that Chriſt the Sun of righteouſneſſe was eclipſed at that time; for there was darkneſſe over the face of the whole earth, *Mark* 15.33.

The ſecond wonder was in the *temple*, the vale of the temple did rent, *verſ.* 38. to ſhew that the ceremonies therein contained were abrogated, the ſubſtance being then preſent.

The third wonder was in the *rocks*, the hard rocks clave, to convince the hardnes of thoſe that did not rent their hearts.

The fourth wonder was in the *earth*, *Mat.* 27. 51. the earth did quake at the ſight thereof, to upbraid thoſe that quaked not.

The fifth wonder was in the *ſepulchres*, many graves were opened, to ſhew the vertue of Chriſts paſſion.

And as there were wonders *corporall*, ſo there were wonders *ſpirituall*.

Firſt, the *Centurion* glorified God, ſaying, This was the Son of God, *Mat.* 27.54. Secondly, there was a *wonder among the people, beholding the things that were done*; they ſmote their breaſts, and returned. A third wonder was on this *thief*, for he

was converted; *To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* Thus you see that Christs passion was full of wonders, so that there is no ground for a man to delay his repentance, hoping to repent as this Thief did, unlesse he will look for wonders. Canst thou expect, when thou liest a *dying*, that that he will rent the rocks again, or open the graves, or create new wonders? No, no, thou canst not look for forgivenesse, if thou *deferrest* thy repentance. This repentance was *extraordinary*, and one of the wonders of Christs passion.

Secondly, *that this repentance was extraordinary, it may appear by the number*; for of all numbers of men from the creation to that houre, it was never read that any one was converted thus *at the last*, as was this Thief; so that for all that we know, for this one Thief that was *penitent* and so *saved* at the *last*, the whole world of the wicked and ungodly, that *delayed* their repentance, living and dying in *sin*, were damned for ever. For all that we know, *Er* and *Onan*, *Jeroboam* and *Pharaoh*, as they lived in sin, so the Scriptures plainly shew that they died in their sinnes. What need I speak of those hundred fourscore and

and five thousand, 2 *King.* 19. 35. all clapt to hell in one night, for all we know? What need I speak of the old world? As they were disobedient in the dayes of *Noah*, so they are now in chains. What need I speak of *Admah*, *Zeboim*, *Sodom* and *Gomarrah*, burnt with fire and brimstone? so that as they lived in sin, so they died and were damned in their sins, for all we know. Now what poor ground is this for a man to *deferre* his repentance, thinking to repent at the last houre, when among so many millions of men, only this Thief found repentance? Thus you see it was extraordinary, in regard of the number.

Thirdly, *in regard of the suddennesse of it*, Repentance the work of grace ordinarily takes up the whole time of life, and will require as many dayes as a man lives; this is a *great* work and it cannot be performed on the suddain, and yet that this work should be attained unto in that while he was on the crosse, this must needs be *wonderfull*; nay he had not so much time; for it seems he did hang on the crosse in his sin, the thieves (saith the text) reviled him, *Mat.* 27. 44.

both cast the same thing in his dish, therefore he was not working repentance all the time; this then must needs be wonderfull, that this work should be dispatched in one houre, and God knowes it might have been in lesse time effected. Is it not a wonder that a man that hath no skill in musick should learne that Art in one houre? Is it not a wonder that a boy that knowes not a letter in the book should learne to write and read well and speak good latine in one houre? Is it not a wonder that a man that is an *errant ignoramus*, should attaine to be a good Lawyer in one houre? These are wonders: So I tell you repentance, grace and conversion, are *hard* artes, harder then musick or divinity, harder then all artes; there is no arte so hard as to learne to goe to heaven, and can a man learne this in one houre? if he doe, it is a wonder: It cost *David* all his life time; *Timothy* from his youth studied the Scriptures, and *Hillary* said, *90. yeares have I been learning to die.* If a man had Methusalahs dayes he could no more then con this lesson, now seeing repentance is so long an arte, and we think to repent as

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the thiefe, becauſe *Philip* was carried to *Azotus* at a trice, *Acts* 8. 30. which was as ſome affirme 16 miles, doth it follow that another ſhall doe ſo too? the way to heaven is a long way, and if the thief diſpatcht it in one houre, it was a miracle.

This repentance was extraordinary in regard of the Evangelicall perfection of it, though diſpatcht on a ſuddaine, yet it was not done to halves, but was perfect conſiſting of theſe ſeven parts.

For firſt, there was his *penetentiall confeſſion*, as you may read verſe 41. we indeed juſtly receive the due reward of our death, *q. d.* Tis juſt with God that I am brought to the gallows, & juſt it were with God if I were damned, I have lived all my dayes in roving and hunting up and downe, in breaking Gods commandements, and now God hath juſtly found me out; this is his open penitentiall confeſſion.

Here is his *penitentiall profeſſion*, but this man hath done nothing amiſſe, all his Doctrine was true, not one jot amiſſe in all his life, there was nothing amiſſe; but you Scribes have cryed crucifie him

amisse; thou wretched *Judas* hast betrayed him amisse; he is the Son of God; here he confesseth Christ to be the *Messiah*, and thus he stood for him against all the world.

3. Here is his *penitential satisfaction*; as he had been partner with the other thiefe in sin, so now he labours to make him satisfaction in turning him to God, in the 40 verse, dost thou not feare God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? Alas thou and I have plaid the villanes against God, and are justly damned; But as we have been theeves together, so now let us repent together, and call on God together; dost thou not feare God seeing that thou art in the same condemnation? and thus he labours to convert his fellow thief.

4. Here is his *penitential self-denyal*; he denyes himself, he loves the glory of God more then his owne soule or salvation, mark here how he labours to convert his fellow thiefe and to make him give all the glory to God; he was so wounded to the soule that his fellow thief should dishonour God, as that he laboured to turn him before he prayed for his own soule;

ſoule; doſt thou not fear God? &c. this he ſaid, before he ſaid, *Lord remember mee*; he lets his owne ſoule lie at the ſtake while he labours to glorifie God; ſo that it is plaine he loves God more then his owne ſoule.

5. Here you may ſee his *penitential faith*, he beleeves not with a *generall* faith, but with a *ſaving* and *particular* faith, with faith and aſſurance he lookes on Chriſt as his Jeſus; he ſaid unto Jeſus; there is not one idle word in this text, the holy Ghoſt ſayes he ſaid unto Jeſus, he ſaid not that he thought to ſay ſo, but the Spirit of God witneſſeth that he ſaid ſo indeed, he ſpake to Chriſt as to a Jeſus.

6. Here is his *penitential reſolution* of newnes of life & new obedience for time to come; *Lord, remember mee*; he acknowledgeth Chriſt to bee his Lord, *q.d.* I have followed the imaginations of my owne will hitherto; all my ſtealing and other ſins have been to fulfill my owne will; but now I confeſſe thee to be my Lord, and were I to live againe, or any longer, I would for ever ſerve thee.

Laſtly, here is his *penitential prayer*,

Lord:

Lord remember me; he acknowledges Christ to be *his* Lord, nay he did not only pray thus, but saith *Basil*, he offered much prayer unto God, even as much as his short time could permit; these words are but the summe of what he spake, Lord remember mee, &c. thus you see he was no more a thief but a convert and confessour, as *Augustine* observes, a wicked thief to steal earthly things, but a good thief (as we call him to this day) to break through into the Kingdom of heaven, he steals Paradise, thus you see what a *wonderfull* repentance he had, in regard of the perfection of it; *faith* was in it, *humiliation* was in it, *turning to God* was in it, *selfe-denyall* was in it, *satisfaction* was in it, *and glorifying of God in the face of the world* was in it; nay he was the only professor of Christ, to the Nations at that time; he had never a servant but this; never a word at this time spoken for Christ, but that which this Thief spake; none to back Christ but this Thief; he was the only professor and confessor of Christ at this time, the only man on the earth that glorified GOD. Therefore unlesse thou expect such a death, to bring such glory to God as this Thief did,

did, never beare thy self upon his example.

Fifthly, *This repentance was extraordinary, in regard of the incomparablenesse of it;* Never was there such a repentance since the world began, nor shall be while the world stands: For when all the world, Jews and Gentiles, stood in their obstinacie, Priests and Rulers, great and small, all cryed *Crucifie him*; and when the Disciples doubted, this Thief believed; and when *Peter* denied Christ, this Thief repented and confessed Christ; nay, when all the Apostles shewed their heeles, this Thief stood to his tacklings, this Thief maintains Christ against them all; nay when *Mary Magdalen*, out of whom Christ had cast seven devils, when she was afraid to come neer to the Crosse, *Mat.* 27. 55. and the mother of *Zebedees* children, who should have come neer, yet they stood a far off; only this Thief published the gospel of Jesus Christ, and makes open acknowledgement of him to be the Saviour of the world, when all his Disciples and the world forsook him in their obstinacie, and, as the Papists observe, God then had no visible Church upon the earth; so that this

this Thief on the crosse put down all the world for repentance, yea the Apostles of Christ. Now shew me such a repentance whereby thou maiest put down *Peter* and all the Apostles of Christ; either shew me *such* a repentance, extraordinary, incomparable, and wonderfull, to make them all ashamed: I say, either shew me *such* a repentance, or never trust on the Thieves example on the crosse. If a man have a hundred miles to go for his life, and but a short time allotted unto him, he had need make haste. Now the way to *heaven* is a long way, and he that can begin and end that journy when he lies a *dying*, is the quickest man of foot that ever yet was heard, this Thief only excepted. If thou *run* to *obtain*, thou hadst need to have the *art* of *prayer* and *repentance*, or else thou canst not overtake them, for they are before thee much.

Use. *This may serve to condemne those that rely upon this example.* Oh, saith one, did not the Thief on the crosse repent at the last houre? and God is the same God still; and if he repented at thee last, why may not I? How many wrest this Scripture to their own damnation? that live in sin with

with this Thief that went to heaven, yet die and are damned, with the other Thief that went to hell.

I will demonstrate this and make it plain, because I desire to convince all that hear me.

First then, tell me *when this Thief was converted?* was it not when Christ hung on the crosse? *Mat.* 27. 33. Christ hung then on the crosse, and was to be inaugurated King over all. Now, *when Kings are inaugurated into their kingdoms, they shew that bounty, then, which they will not do again all the time of their raigne.* We have of this a sufficient story in the Chronicles of *England*, of King *Henry* the fourth, who when he was inaugurated King, he created 55 Knights, he hung all the streets and lanes in *London* with cloth of gold, he made all the Conduits in *London* to run with Sack, Claret and White wine: this he did when he was inaugurated King, which he never did all his life time afterwards. Even so Christ was pleased to shew mercy and grace unto this Thief, unto life eternall, when he was inaugurated King over principalities and powers, over hell and darknesse. Now as K. *Henry* never

never created so many Knights again; never hung *London* streets so again, never made the Conduits run so with wine again; even so the Lord shewed such a bounty then, as, for ought we know, he never did before, nor will do the like again.

Secondly, *Kings when they are inaugurated, they pardon such offences, forgive such taxations, wrongs, injuries, treasons and felonies, as they will never pardon again as long as they live in the kingdome.* So we read of *Charles* the 3 King of *France*, that day that he was crowned, he pardoned all those that had sinned against the Crown, in what kinde soever they had offended; Why? because he was crowned King, and so he would make *that* day a day of rejoycing. And thus it was when Christ triumphed over hell, he forgave the sins of this Thief, the like whereof we never read of, and for ought we know will never do the like again.

3. Tell me *where was this thief pardoned?* Was it not in Golgotha, where Christ was crucified, the place where Christ did triumph, where he was crowned, where he forgave transgressions and sins? there it

was

was where Christ pardoned him. Now as it is with a Captain, when he hath gotten the victory, he will set up some monument on the place, that it may be a token thereof; so Christ having wrought the salvation of the world, set up a monument there where he wrought it, whereof none greater then this could be, not the rending of the rocks, nor the earthquake, nor any of the wonders besides did so *honour* the death of Christ, as the *conversion* of *this Thief*, who like a Physitian having made an excellent medicine, and desirous to try it, will do that for nothing, which he will not do again for much: so Christ having made an admirable soveraign plaister for the salvation of mankinde, so soon as ever he had made it, he makes an experiment thereof on this Thief; as if he should have said, Now you shall see what my death can do. So then you see that the conversion of this Thief was no ordinary, but an extraordinary wonder.

Fourthly, *tell me how he cures by forgivenesse*, not by bare repentance only, but by repentance with *Martyrdome*; he did not only nakedly repent of his sin, but he died also a *Martyr* for Christ; hee was a Mar-

Martyr on the crosse; for although he was first hung on the crosse for his evill deeds, yet afterwards when he repented and confessed the Lord Jesus Christ, and maintained him to be the *Messias* and condemned *Pilate*, *Herod*, and the Jewes, by publishing that he was unjustly crucified, and that he was the son of God; I say though at the first he was hung on the crosse for his sin; yet *now* they let him hang for his religion, as by their own law it was manifest; for they had a law that whosoever confessed Christ, should be punished; so that now he confessing Christ, they let him hang for his religion to Christ, so that he died a Martyr; and verse 20. what a witnesse he gave unto Christ? The other answering, he rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou feare God? &c. As if he should say, thou seest the Scribes and Pharisees feare not God, they have conspired against the Son of God. The Jewes that should have beleeved on him crye d crucifiy him; *Herod* hath mocked him, *Pilate* condemned him; dost thou not yet feare God? what not thou that art in the state of condemnation, thou that art to be damned within this houre?

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is it not enough for them to crucifie Christ, but doth not *thou* feare God neither; Oh what a witnesse was this unto Christ; no wonder if he found mercy when it pleased the Lord to enlarge himselfe so in bringing his soule unto him.

But it may be objected, why is this Scripture recorded, if I may not make this use of it to repent as this thief did, seeing all Scripture is for our learning? *Obj.*

You know the common answer, *it is once recorded that none might despaire, and but once, that none might presume.* Christ saved him at the last cast, that when a man is at that *pinch* hee might not *despaire* if he *repent* and become a new creature; and but *one* was saved that none might presume. *Sol.*

There are many reasons why this Scripture is recorded.

First, *to shew the soveraignty of Christs death*, and as Christ healed all manner of sicknesse in his life, so his death is able to heale all manner of sins; it is the leaves of that tree only that can heale the Nations, *Rev.* 22. 2. and therefore the Scripture sets downe a desperate example of a

thief; for a man must be a desperate man, if he be a thief: and Christ did this to shew that he can shew mercy even to a thief, that so all the world may take notice of the vertue of Christs death.

Secondly, *it is recorded, that no poor soul should cry out of his sinnes*, saying, I am damned, I am accursed, I am more sinfull and graceless then any man, more wicked then any man. I say, do not thus reason; for here is an example set down of the thief, and you know what Christ said to the multitude, of a Thief; *Do you come unto me as to a thief, with swords and staves?* as if he should have said, You deal basely with me, as if I were as bad as a thief, implying, that a thief is the worst of all men, nay as bad as the devil, *Joh.* 12. 6. And it is reckoned as one of their damnable usages against Christ, that they hung him between two thieves, two of the vilest creatures of all: so that a thiefe is an example of a desperate man; and yet you see Christ hath mercy, and gives it to a *thief*. Therefore if the LORD have enlarged thy heart to *repent*, be not discouraged, but lay hold on CHRIST.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, *this Scripture is recorded, that we may not cast off all men that come to the last cast*; all men, though great sinners, must not desperately be cast off: For suppose a man have been a Drunkard, yet prayer and supplication may be made to God for him, and God may open his eyes; and there is some possibility that he may be saved, though it be a thousand to one; yet I say there is some *possibilitie*, for there was one thief saved at the last cast: and therefore a Drunkard, &c. is not to be given over for quite gone. It may be there are a wonderfull company of *improbabilities* in it, yet we cannot tell but that this may be the *second* to whom the Lord will give repentance, and therefore the Lord converted this thief.

Lastly, *this story is recorded, that by it we may be encouraged to believe, and to be converted betimes.* For if the Lord were so willing to receive the *thief* that sought him but at the *last* houre, how willing will he be then to receive thee that seekest him *betimes*? But as for thee that livest in thy sins, and beareſt on the example of this Thief; let me tell thee, this story was never penned for thy comfort. The Lord

knew how men would abuse this story; therefore S. *Matthew*, S. *Mark*, and S. *John* omit it; and if we had none to testifie it, all the world would say both the theeves were damned; nay, S. *Matthew* saith, the theeves, *both the theeves* cast the same thing in his teeth: only S. *Luke*, he pens it for the comfort of the godly; he was loath (as it seems to me) to leave it out quite, because some poor soule might stand in need of it. Therefore let me here rap off the fingers of all those that would lay hold on this example of the thief, to *defame* their repentance: this story belongs not unto such.

First, *because this thief had not the means of life and grace before*; for where do you read in all the gospel, that ever this Thiefe had the meanes of life? perhaps when Christ was preaching, he was pilfering; where do you read that ever he heard any of the Apostles, or Seventy, or *John* the Baptist, or any Sermon in all his life? No, no, he went roving up and down, we have not one title to imply that he had the *means* of salvation; and therefore this is nothing to thee, that hast the *preaching of the Word*, which reproves thee of thy sins;

sins and therefore if thou wilt go on, thou shalt dye, *Ezech.* 3. 19.

Secondly, this story belongs not unto thee; for, *where dost thou read that ever this thief did build upon this hope?* do you think that this thief said, I will steal as long as I can, I know I shall be imprisoned, and I shall be crucified with Christ, but while I lie in prison, I will repent, and then he will have mercie on me? did this poor thief ever dreame of these hopes; did he presume of mercie, and so sin against mercies, and therefore thou that *buildest* on this example, whosoever thou art, it belongs not unto thee.

Tush, tush, sayes the Drunkard shall I be damned? the thief was saved. Thou cursed caitiffe, what though thou shouldst repent and cry for mercie? are thou sure the Lord will heare and pardon thee? when I spake to you said *Moses*, you would not heare, but rebelled, and were presumptuous, *Deut.* 1. 43. Dost thou presume on Gods mercie that hee will convert thee at the last? I tell thee that Gods mercy is good mercie, it is not like the mercie of a wicked Iudge, that is wickedly mercifull, and suffers Rogues to be pardoned; No, no,

no, Gods mercie is *good*, *Psal.* 109. 21. *mercie* and *justice* are all one with God, and they have all one name in scripture. There is a crown laid up for me saith *Paul* which the Lord, the *just* Judge shall give me (*viz.*) which God the *mercifull* Judge shall give unto me; God is *just* in his *mercie*, and therefore thinkest thou to live in thy sins, to sweare, to lie, to be drunk, &c. and yet hope to have mercy? thou art deceived; the Lords mercy is *just* mercy, and he will damne thee for evermore, if thou repent not in sincerity. You never read in the Scripture, that there is mercy in the wayes of the devil: But, *Psal.* 25. 10. all the wayes of the Lord are mercy and judgement, *&c.* So long as thou walkest in the wayes of the Lord, there is mercy to thee in every step; mercy in Prayer, mercy in hearing the Word, and in receiving the Sacraments; but in the wayes of the devil there is no mercy; for as long as thou walkest in darknesse, security, and all sinfull and vain courses, which are the wayes of the devil, there is no mercy for thee; for, the Spirit of God saith, those that follow their vanities, forsake their own mercies; you must turn from your

your *own* wayes; for the way of mercy lies in another road, in the road of holineſſe, humiliation, and repentance, in the road of forſaking all your vain imaginations and thoughts; If thou follow thy own wayes, God will have no mercy on thee, *Jonas* 2.8. He will not tell a lye, to have mercy on thee: Gods mercy is true, and *mercy* and *truth* go together, *Pſal.* 98.3. Now if thou be a Drunkard, and doſt live and die in that ſin, God hath ſaid that he will damn thee, *Gal.* 5.21. Now he ſhould be a liar, if he ſhould not do it, and thou knoweſt that mercy and truth go together in him: Therefore in time repent, Piſh, piſh, ſayes the Drunkard, &c. I hope the Lord will be more merciful; theſe Preachers preach nothing but damnation, I hope the Lord will pardon me. Pardon thee, ſaith God? how ſhall I pardon thee for this? Thy children have forſaken me, and ſworne by them that are no gods, and though I fed them to the full, yet they committed adultery, and aſſembled themſelves by troopes in the harlots houſes, *Jer.* 5.7. As if God ſhould have ſaid, I cannot pardon thee. No: why? Thou wilt not come at me, thou haſt forſaken

me in mine *ordinances*, &c. Will a Phyſitian cure a man that will not come at him? why, they have forſaken me, ſaith God, and they will not come at me; as if he ſhould ſay, I am willing to pardon, I ſend out my commandements, but they will not bend their mindes to keep them, they forſake theſe wayes of mercy. Have mercy on them? nay, ſhall I not rather viſit for theſe things, ſaith the Lord? *Jer.* 5.9. If thoſe that diſobeyed *Moſes* law dyed without mercy, *Heb.* 10. how then lookeſt thou for mercy, that *deſpiſeſt* the Lord Jeſus, even the goſpel of his kingdome? Nay, the croſſe of Chriſt cals thee, he woos thee by his death and paſſion, and now if thou wilt not *obey*, thou ſhalt die without mercy. Oh what a curſed concluſion is this: I have a mercifull and a good Father, and therefore I will lift up my head againſt him; I know he will forgive me; I will break my head, I know where to have a plaiſter to heal it; I will offer ſuch a man a wrong, I know he will not ſue me? Thou curſed wretch! though the Lord pardon ten thouſand, yet he will not pardon thee; no, no, thou ſinneſt with a high hand. But keep your ſelves in

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the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, *Jude* 21. Keep your selves there, if you be wise; for if Gods patience be abused, it will be turned into wrath and wormwood, and it will burn like fire unto the nethermost hell: so a man that sins against *mercy*, there is no redemption; this story belongs not unto such.

Thirdly, this story is nothing to thee, because *at that time God was in a way of working miracles*, but now he is not in that way, then he rent the rocks, opened the sepulchres, and raised the dead, &c. Now unless thou take God in this way again, never look to have thy sinnes pardoned, if thou goest on in thy sinnes with a high hand. It may be God will not be in the way of working of miracles, when thou art a dying; No, the Lord will shew salvation to no man but unto him that orders his conversation aright, *Psal.* 50. 23. thy life must be right, and all thy wayes must be *upright*, if thou mean to find *mercie*.

But the Thief was converted, without ordering his wayes aright.

I answer, one Swallow cannot make Spring,

Spring, nor one fair day a harveſt; One example cannot make a rule, one inſtance concludes nothing. This example breakes no ſquare; but it is onely hee that lives *uprightly*, that ſhall ſee the ſalvation of God, and none elſe. And if thou doſt mean to go to heaven, thou muſt go in the *way* that leads thither, and thou muſt do thoſe things that are between thee and heaven: there is but *one* way to heaven, and all that go to heaven muſt walk *that* way; there is *one* faith, *one* newneſſe of life, *one* kinde of regeneration, and God will have thee go all theſe over, he will have thee run through every Commandement; all that come to heaven muſt travell thither: therefore never beare thy ſelf on this or that example, for 'tis a wonder of wonders, one of the miracles of Chriſts paſſion.

I remember the ſtory of an ancient Confeſſor which proved a worthy Chriſtian, 300 years after the Apoſtles time: this man was an old man, and had been a Pagan all his dayes, and in his old age he hearkened after Chriſt, and ſaid he would be a Chriſtian. *Simplicius* hearing him ſay ſo,

so would not believe him; but when the Church saw him to be a Christian *indeed*, there was shouting and dancing for gladnesse, and Psalmes were sung in every Church, *Caius Marius Victorius* is become a Christian: this was written for a *wonder*, that he in his *old* age and in his gray haires should become a *good* Christian; so this is a great wonder, and an extraordinary example, that this Theefe was converted. Do you not think that there were a thousand theeves that at that time lived and dyed in their sins, and so were damned? Were there not many widows in the dayes of *Elias*, and yet to none of them was he sent but to the widow of *Sarepha*? Were there not many Lepers in the dayes of *Elisha*? yet none of them were cleansed saving *Naaman* the Syrian. So there were many thousands at that time, and yet for all that we know they were all damned, only this one is excepted. Now, shall a man rush into a den of Lyons, because *Daniel* did escape? or will a man cast himself into a fiery furnace, because the three Children were cast in and had no hurt? Shall a man venture to cast away his jewels or his purse, because one among a thousand

sand did so, and found it again? No, no, these are wonders, and therefore beate not thy self on this, or the like example.

The common rule is this, *Live in sinne, and die in sinne*; you that live in sinne now, shall then be damned in sinne for ever, if you repent not. St. *Paul* knew well that this thief was converted; and yet he saith, *Be not deceived, neither Drunkards, nor Fornicators, nor Theeves*, &c. *shall inherit the kingdom of God.* 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. St. *Peter* also knew that this thief was converted, yet saith he, *If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinners and ungodly appeare?* 2 Pet. 2. 9. St. *James* also knew this story, Jam. 5. 12. yet if we *sweare*, we may fall into condemnation. This is a most sweet example, if by it we return unto God; but thou makest a damned use of it, if by it thou make st thy self *secure* in thy sinfull courses, hoping to be saved in the last, as this thief was. Consider with your selves, wherefore are the commandments of God? are they, think you, to be disobeyed while men live, and then when men are dying, to cry God mercy? Again, why hath God given you Ministers to preach the Word of eternall life?

Never

Never to preach it to men till they are a dying? No, no, deceive not thy ſelf; thou muſt hear Gods Miniſters preach whilſt thou art *well*. What, hath God given you dayes, that you ſhould ſpend your lives in ſin? No, no; ſaith God, I gave her *time* to repent, but ſhe repented not, *Rev.*2.21. And this is the reaſon that God gives thee time; That thou mighteſt repent. The Lord could have ſent thee to hell as ſoon as thou waſt borne, but that in mercy he gives thee life and time to repent, that ſo thou mayeſt find forgiveneſſe with God, and that thou mayeſt become a new creature, before thou go hence and be no more ſeen. You that think to repent, reſting on the example of this thief, take heed leſt the Lord put you off: therefore labour to *obey* whilſt it is called *to day*, and make uſe of the Word whilſt it is ſounded in your eares, before theſe things be hid from your eyes.

THE

2 AU 58

THE SOVERAIGNE VERTUE OF THE GOSPEL.

In a SERMON

BY

That laborious and faithfull Messenger of CHRIST,

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THE SOVEREIGNE VERTUE OF THE GOSPEL.

THE Soveraigne Vertue OF THE GOSPEL.

PSAL. 147. 3.

He healeth them that are broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

HEre are two things contained in this Text: the *Patients*, and the *Physitian*.

First, the Patients; the *broken in heart*.

Secondly, the Physitian, Christ, it is he that healeth and bindeth up their wounds.

The Patients here are felt and diſcerned to have *two* wounds or maladies; Firſt, brokenneſſe in heart; Secondly, woundedneſſe: He binds up ſuch.

Brokenneſſe of heart preſuppoſeth *wholeneſſe* of heart: Wholeneſſe of heart is twofold; either wholeneſſe of heart *in ſinne*, or wholeneſſe of heart *from ſinne*.

Firſt, wholeneſſe of heart *from ſinne*, is, when the heart is *without ſinne*; and ſo the bleſſed Angels have whole hearts, and ſo *Adam* and *Eve*, and we in them before the fall, had *whole* hearts.

Secondly, wholeneſſe of heart *in ſinne*; ſo the Devils have whole hearts, and all men ſince the fall from their conception, till their converſion, have whole hearts; and theſe are they that our Saviour intends, *The whole need not the phyſitian, but they that are ſick*. The hearts that are whole, need not the phyſitian, but they that are broken and ſick. Sinne is in the godly, and they are ſick of it; even as when poyſon is in a man, it makes him ſick; why? becauſe the poyſon is contrary unto him. But ſinne is in the wicked, and they are not *ſick* of it; as poyſon is in a toad, and the toad is not ſick, becauſe a toad is of

that

that nature which the poyson is; and therefore he needs not a physitian. Will a Physitian go to cure a Toad? surely no, he will rather kill it, he will not cure it. So, as long as a man is not sick at the *heart* of his sin, Christ will rather kill him than *cure* him. When a man sayes he is sick, and yet can sleep, eat, drink, and work, and look as well as ever he did, feels no pain, nor any thing to trouble him, what need hath this man of a physitian? So when a man lives in sinne, yet never breaks his sleep for it, but mindes his pleasures, his profits, hath never the more pain nor anguish in his soule, he is *soule-whole*, and heart-whole, what need hath he of a Physitian? This is a man *whole* in his sins.

The wholenesse of the heart is called *fallow-ground*, Jer. 4. 4. for it is like an unbroken field, not tilled nor manured; there can be no harvest, because the ground doth lie fallow; so there can be no harvest of *grace* in that man, whose heart is fallow and unbroken; and therefore to repent and to break the heart, in Scripture is called the putting of ones hand to the plough, *Luke* 9. 62. to plough up the fallow ground of the heart.

Brokenneſſe of heart may be conſider-ed two wayes; Firſt, *in relation to wholeneſſe of heart in ſinne*: ſo brokenneſſe of heart is not a maladie, but an inchoative cure of a deſperate maladie.

Secondly, *in relation to wholeneſſe of heart from ſinne*; and ſo it is a maladie or ſickneſſe, and yet peculiar to one blood alone, namely Gods *elect*; for though the heart be whole, yet it is broken for its ſinne: as a man that hath a barbed arrow ſhot in-to his ſide, and the arrow is pluckt out of the fleſh, yet the wound is not preſently healed; ſo ſinne may be pluckt out of the heart, but the ſcar that was made with plucking it out, is not yet cured. The wounds that are yet under cure, are the plagues and troubles of conſcience, the ſighs and groanes of a hungering ſoule after grace, the ſtinging poyſon that the blow hath left behind it; theſe are the wounds.

Now the heart is broken three wayes. Firſt, *by the Law*: as it breaks the heart of a thief to heare the ſentence of the Law, that he muſt be hanged for his robbery; ſo it breaks the heart of the ſoule, ſenſible to underſtand the ſentence of the Law:

Thou

Thou shalt not sin; if thou do, thou shalt be damned. If ever the heart come to be sensible of this sentence, *Thou art a damned man*, it is impossible to stand out under it, but it must break. *Is not my word a hammer that breaks the rocks in peeces?* Jer. 23. 29. that is, Is not my word, my Law a hammer? Can any rock-heart hold out and not be broken with the blowes of it? Indeed thus far a man may be broken, and yet be a reprobate; for they shall be all thus broken in hell, and therefore this breaking is not enough.

Secondly, *by the Gospel*; for if ever the heart come to be sensible of its blow, it will break all to shatters. *Rent your hearts, for the Lord is gracious*, &c. *Joel* 2. 12. When all the shakes of Gods mercy come, they all cry, *rent*. Indeed the heart cannot stand out against them, if it once feel them: Beat thy soule upon the Gospel: if any way under heaven can break it, this is the way.

Aristotle observes, that a hammer may easily break a hard stone against a soft bed; but if it be laid on an anvil, which will not give way underneath, strike it as hard as you will with the hammer on the top, the

anvil underneath props it from breaking, or if it do break, it will not break into shatters; for the anvil below helps the stone to hang fast together: but if you smite it against a soft bed, it breaks it all to shatters. So, smite thy soule upon the Gospel; preach the Law as much as you will, preach hell and damnation as much as you will, let that be the hammer; but then be sure lay thy soule on the Gospel, drive it to the Gospel, smite against this soft bed, and then (if ever) it will break. If you strike a stone against a hard anvil, though the parts thereof would fall asunder, yet how can they flie off, when as the hard anvil will not give way? the hard anvil on the one side, and the hard hammer on the other side, stop up its way from falling asunder. So, strike the soule with the blowes of Gods wrath as much as you will, and let it be upon the Law; alas whither should the Law open it self that it might break? the Law doth but fear it on the one side, and the wrath of God doth terrifie it on the other, yet all this while it is not broken; the soule all this while knowes not what it shall doe: but smite it on the Gospel, and this, with the

the Law, rents it and breaks it indeed. So *Peter* he preached hell and damnation to the people of the Jews, and laid their hearts upon mercie, and then the hammer cries *rent*; for he is mercifull, &c. he laid them on the soft bed of the Gospel, and then he smites them.

Thirdly, *the heart is broken by the skill of the Minister* in the handling of these two, the Law, and the Gospel: God furnisheth him with skill to presse the Law home, and gives him understanding how to put to the Gospel, and by this means doth God break up the heart: For alas, though the Law be never so good a hammer, and although the Gospel be never so soft a bed, yet if the Minister lay not the soul upon it the heart will not break; he must fetch a full stroke with the Law, and he must set the full power of the Gospel at the back of the soul, or else the heart will not break.

It is a pretty observation of *Aristotle*, Lay (saith he) an axe upon a block, and a great and mighty weight upon it, yet it will not enter into the block to cleave it; but if you lift up the axe and fetch a full blow at the block, then it enters presently. So if the Minister have not *skill* to fetch a

dead blow at the heart, alas he may be long enough ere he break it; but let him fetch a full blow at the soule, then doth he break it, if ever. I took unto me two staves, saith the Prophet, the one I called *beauty*, the other I called *bands*, and with these I fed the flock, *Zach.* 11. 7. There is the course of a true feeder of the flock, he feeds them with the *Law* and the *Gospel*; he takes his two staves, and he layes about him, till the hearts of his hearers feel him: and this is the way to feed them, and to break them off from their sins. Thus you see the means that God useth to break your hearts. *He healeth the broken in heart.* Hence observe,

That *Christ justifies and sanctifies.* For that is the meaning.

First, because *God hath given Christ grace to practise for the sakes of the broken in heart*; and therefore if this be his grace, to heal the broken-hearted, certainly he will heal them. *The spirit of the Lord is upon me*, &c. *He hath sent me to heal the broken in heart*, &c. *Luk.* 4. 18. If he be *created* master of this art, even for this purpose, to heale the broken in heart, he will verily heale them, and none but them.

them. He is not like *Hosander* and *Hippocrates*, whose father appointed them both to be Physitians; he appointed his sonne *Hippocrates* to be a physitian of horses, yet he proved a physitian for men; he appointed *Hosander* to be a physitian for men, and he proved a physitian for horses. He is not like these; no, no, he will heale those whom he was appointed to heale: now God appointed him to heale thee that art broken in heart, and therefore without doubt he will do it.

2. Because *Christ hath undertaken to do it.* When a skilful Physitian hath undertaken a cure, he will surely do it: indeed sometimes a good physitian may fail, as *Trajans* physitian did, for he died under his hands, on whose tomb this was written, Here lies *Trajan* the Emperour, that may thank his Physitian that he died. But if Christ undertake it, thou maiest be sure of it, for he tels thee that art *broken in heart*, that he hath undertaken it, he hath felt thy pulse already *Thus saith the high and holy one whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, and with him that is of an humble and broken spirit, &c.* Isa. 57. 15. He doth not only undertake it, but he saith he will

will go *visit* his sick patients he will come to thy bed-side, yea he will come and dwell with thee all the time of thy sickness, thou shalt never want any thing, but he will be ready to help thee: thou needest not complain and say, Oh the Physitian is too far off, he will not come at me. I dwell in the high places indeed, saith God, but yet I will come and dwell with thee that art of an humble spirit. Thou needest not fear, saying, Will a man cure his enemies? I have been an enemy to Gods glory, and will he yet cure me? yea, saith Christ, if thou be *broken in heart*, he will bind thee up.

Thirdly, because *this is Christs charge*, and he will look to his own calling; To this man will I look, even to him that is of a broken heart, *Isa.66.2.* Mark; I will *look* to him, I will tend him and keep him. Neither needest thou feare thine own povertie, because thou hast not a Fee to give him; for thou maiest come to him by way of begging, he will look to thee for nothing; For, *to him will I look that is poor*, &c.

Fourthly, *none but the broken in heart will take Physick of Christ.* Now this is a Phy-

Physitians desire, that his Patient would cast himselfe upon him; if he will not, the Physitian hath no desire to meddle with him. Now none but the broken in heart will take such Physick as Christ gives, and therefore he saith, *to him will I look that is of a broken heart, and trembles at my words*, Esay 66. 2. When I bid him take such a purge saith God, he trembles, and he takes it. I bid him take such a bitter Potion, or such an untoothsome vomit, to feare him from sinne; he trembles at my word, and he dares not but off with it: But when a soule doth not tremble, then the Physitian may say let him bloud; but he cares not for being let bloud; he cares not for corrosives, he cares not for his advise and counsell, he trembles not at his word; Christ will never come at such a one; Christ bids thee follow such a diet as to *watch*, to *pray*, to *fast*, to *mourne*, &c. to keep in and to take heed to catechizing, grow not cold by being lukewarme, &c. If thou *tremble* at his word, well; If not, but that thou wilt go on in thy sinnes, and be damned for ever, then thank thine owne wilfulnesse. But if thou beest broken in heart, Christ will assuredly heale thee. Suppose

Suppoſe thou ſhouldeſt come unto Chriſt, be his phyſick never ſo ſoveraign, and thou ſhouldſt take it, yet if thy heart be againſt it, the phyſick cannot work. *Imagination* or *fancie* is a great thing in the good or ill ſucceſſe of phyſick. If thou carpe at his precepts, as too ſtrict, and except againſt his word as if it had an ounce of wormwood too much in it; If thy imaginations thus run againſt the phyſick, Chriſts phyſick will never cure thee; why ſo? thou art not broken in heart, to tremble at his word; he will help thee without faile; but then thou muſt *tremble* at his word, and take his directions, though he preſcribe thee to eate thine owne dung, and drink thine owne piſſe; take it, I ſay what ever it be, and I will warrant thee health.

Obj. But thou wilt reply, I *have but a little faith.*

Sol. I anſwer, ſo had *Peter*; *O thou of little faith wherefore didſt thou doubt?* ſaith our Saviour, *Matth.* 14. 13. There is a *little* faith, and there is a *great* faith; *O woman great is thy faith, Matth.* 15. 28. whether it be a *little* faith or a *great* faith, ſo it bee *true ſaving juſtifying* faith, it is good phyſick, & it will aſſuredly cure thee. It is not

the

the *quantity* of faith that saves a man, but the *quality* of faith. True it is, a great quantity of faith, because it hath more of the quality, more of the truth, it heales more strongly and more steadily; But faith whether it be great or small, so it be *true*, that doth the deed. Shall the Patient doubt of his recovery because of the small measure of physick that the Physitian gives him? The Physitian gives but a dram of such a powder, but perhaps the Patient would have a pound, when as it may be the state of his body will not bear it. The Physitian observes his measures in prescribing so many ounces of this, so many scruples of that; there lies his skill in giving the true measure; so there is a true measure of faith, *Rom.* 12.3. one man hath so much, and another man hath not so much faith. *Abraham* had more faith then *Lot*; the reason is, because the state of *Lots* soule would not beare so much as *Abrahams*. It is one of *Hippocrates* Amphorismes, *Not too much at once.*

A Physitian finds it dangerous sometimes to empty the body at once, or to fill it all at once, or to heat it or to coole it all at once; it is the safest way to give by little

tle and little; so God by little and little deales with thee; now he gives thee some faith, and then a little more.

Object. *O but my faith is smothered; how then can I expect to be healed?*

Answ. I answer, a man is sick, and Violets will cure him; now the Physitian makes a compound confection, so that the Violets doe not appeare, but onely in oyle; Now, will the Patient thus argue, I cannot see one leafe of a Violet, no not yet so much as colour, therefore I will none of it, it will not heale me? So God gives many a soule *unguentum fidei*, an oyle of faith; now it may be the soule cannot see one jot of faith in himselfe, yet he shall be cured because there is faith in a confection, a mixed faith though there be none in manifestation. Thou weepest, mournest, doubtest, and complainest, and thou canst not beleeve as thou saiest; yet thou never giv'st over crying *my God my God*; well, here is faith in a *confection*, but it may be it is so compounded with other ingredients that thou canst not perceive it; for you must know that there is faith so great that it breakes out into a flame, and there is faith which is so small that it does but *smoak* out a little; now

now whether thy faith be an *inflamed* faith or a *smoaking* faith, be of good comfort, thou shalt be healed. *The bruised Reed shall not be broken*, Mat. 12.28.

But I am broken all to shatters, and I have no faith at all; how then can I hope to be cured? Obj.

I answer, as thy heart may be broken, and yet be a right heart; so thy faith may be broken, and yet be a true faith: For it is sometimes bound up in the whole, sometimes it is broken, and all to peeces; A man that is broken in heart, although he have not faith bound up together in *one* act, yet he hath it broken in sunder; never a part is missing, though no part closing one with another. The *one whole* act of faith is this, *I beleeve that God is my God in Christ.* Indeed it may be thou hast not this faith in the *whole*, but if thou beest *broken* in heart, thou hast this whole broken in peeces. Ans.

First, thou beleevest that God is a God, there is one peece.

Secondly, thou beleevest that to whomsoever God is a God unto, it is only in Christ.

Thirdly, thou beleevest that he that truly repents, may say say that God is his God in Christ.

Fourth-

Fourthly, thou beleeveſt that repentance is a true hatred of *ſinne* as it is ſinne:

Fifthly, thou beleeveſt, and thy conſcience tels thee it is ſo indeed that thou hateſt ſinne, not only as it is able to damne thee, but alſo as it is ſin, and diſhonourable to God; now theſe are the *parts* of faith in the whole. Thou haſt all the parts *of* the whole; though thou haſt not theſe parts *in* the whole. Well then, thou haſt all the parts of true faith; as thou canſt not deny if thou beeſt broken in heart. *Totum non differt realiter a partibus ſimul ſumptis.* All the parts and the whole doe not differ *really*, ſayes the Philoſopher; he that hath three groats, cannot complaine hee wants a ſhilling; he that hath ruffe and ſtock and ſtring, can he be farre to ſeek for a band? ſo then if thou have faith in the parts on this faſhion, it is certaine thou haſt faith in the whole, though it appeare not yet to be whole.

Ariſtotle asketh this queſtion, *whether the parts be before the whole or no*; as for example, whether a man or a finger be firſt. I will not ſtand here to determine this queſtion; but this is certaine, that the

the whole is a *relative* thing, spoken in relation to its parts, & it is like the relation begins in the whole; for first, we say that a whole is that which consists of parts, and then the parts are they that make up the whole, and therefore if thou verily beleevest in *part*, thou verily beleevest indeed. Thus *David* was a beleever in *part*, my very soule saith he is consumed with grief *Psal.* 31. 9. my strength faileth me because of mine iniquity, &c. verse 10. I am forgotten as a dead man, &c. verse 12. he was a vessell of election, but yet you may see he was a *broken* vessell; he could not beleeve in the *whole*, for he was afraid that God had cast him out of his mind, like a dead and an undone man; nevertheless he was a beleever in *part*, he was Gods *broken* vessell.

But I am sure I have no faith, I goe whyning and crying up and down, I look upon my sins with horror, I look upon Christ with horror, not a minume of faith that I have, how then can I be healed? *Object.*

Hast thou a grounded resolution to seek after God come what can come of it? Dost thou desire and long to be united with Christ? Then let me tell thee, suppose *Answ.*

thou haſt no faith yet in *being*, yet thou haſt ſomething to ſecure thee from wrath; there is difference between *Fides creditura* and *Fides credens*, between faith *about to beleeve*, and faith that doth *already* beleeve. It is *belief believing* that ſaves a man: But *belief about to beleeve*, cures a man from being a reprobate. Though the fruit in the wombe be not yet quickened with a *reaſonable* ſoule, yet it growes in the wombe, feeds in the wombe, and yet it hath no other life in it then may bee in a beaſt; yet becauſe it is *in fieri* a man, the Mother complaines not ſaying Oh I am afraid I have a beaſt in my wombe; no, ſhe will wait Gods leiſure to quicken it; it is ſecure enough from being a beaſt; for it hath ſuch diſpoſitions as will not long be without the ſoule of a man in the ſame, though as yet there be nothing in it, but what may be in a beaſt; But yet the Mother is ſecured becauſe ſhe is perſwaded ſhee beares a babe in her wombe. So many poor ſoules are too haſty to cenſure themſelves; for grant thou haſt no faith as *yet*, yet if thou beeſt *broken* in heart, thou art *about to have faith*; only let the word have his full work on thee, unto which thou muſt diligently

diligently attend, and then this *fides in fieri* will be quickly *fides in facto esse*. Thus the blind man in the Gospell was *about to beleeve before* he beleeved; he had a time of a *fieri* of faith; he was no beleever this time; for he had as yet no faith; neither was hee an unbeleever; for he was about to beleeve. *Dost thou beleeve on the Son of God?* saith Christ *John* 9. 35. he answered, *who is hee Lord that I might beleeve on him?* verse 39. Beleeve? yea that I would with all my heart, who is he, and where is hee that I might beleeve? I have been hated for his names sake, I have been cast out of the Synagogue for his sake; Lord thou knowest I would beleeve on him, but who is hee and where is hee? and he is vanished away from me; I have sought him; but I cannot find him. Then Christ told him, I am hee that now talketh with thee; and then he beleeved; and Saint *Chrysome* observs that this blind man was *about to beleeve*, before he did desire it in his soule; and so it may be it is now with thee; dost thou beleeve in Christ? who is hee? saiest thou, where shall I find that Christ is in me that I may beleeve in him? I weep and hunger, and

I thirſt after Chriſt; but *who* and *where* is hee? I have ſought him in the word; but I find him not; I have ſought him in prayer and in all other his ordinances; but I find him not; I would beleeve with all my heart if I could find him. Thus the ſoule may be *about to beleeve*, though it doe not already beleeve; haſt thou gotten this ſame *about to beleeve*? be not thou diſmayed, the plaiſter is come; and it will heal thee.

Conceive theſe words aright I beſeech you; a ſpeech is not as it is taken, I mean only the *broken* in heart; for otherwiſe a man may be *about to beleeve*, yet never beleeve; about to be healed of his ſins, yet never be healed. Even like the wretch that *Zophar* ſpeakes of, who ſhall be about to fill his belly, and not be able to fill it, *Job* 20. 23.

There is a twofold *about to bee*; Firſt, either ſuch a thing as is *about to bee*, and that is the nature of it, and it *will never be otherwiſe*; but ſtill only about to bee. Secondly, or els ſuch a thing as is *about to be*, and that is the *progreſſe* of it, and not to reſt there, but at the laſt *to bee indeed*.

Feare

Fear you then, all you that are vain, and as yet in your sins; you are *about to beleeve*, and that is the nature of your faith; it is only about to beleeve; like the officers of the next yeare, who are about to be officers and yet are not. Beloved, never look to bee healed, if you be not *broken* in heart; It may be thou art broken from *some* of thy sins; but if thou be not broken from them *all*, it is nothing; and thou cauſt not be healed. Alas thou maiſt be broken in *ſome* ſence, and yet never be healed. There is a *double* breaking, ſaith *Ariſtotle*, either breaking into *great parts*, as wood is broken into logs; or breaking into *ſmall parts*, as a ſtone is broken into powder; it may be thy ſtony heart is broken, but it is only into leſſer *ſtones*, thou art fallen from greater ſins to leſſer, from bezing and company keeping, to drinking and ſipping; from playing and gaming on the Sabbath, to talking of worldly affaires on the Sabbath; from praying not at all, to pray coldly. Alas, alas thou haſt a *hard heart* ſtill; when a great ſtone is broken into leſſer ſtones, the leſſer ſtone is as hard as the great ſtone; thy heart muſt bee broken to *pow-*

der, if ever God heale thee.

Firſt, becauſe *Phyſick will never cure a man, unleſſe it may enter and run into the veines*; and when it is entred into the body, and diffuſed up and down through all the diſeaſed parts thereof, then it cures; now if thy heart be not *broken*, the Phyſick cannot enter; give a purgation to a ſtone, it may moyſten the outſide, but it cannot ſoake in, to ſoften the ſtone; why, becauſe the ſtone is cloſe; but if the ſtone were broken into powder, then it would ſoake even into the heart of the ſtone.

God opened the heart of *Lydia*, and then the word entred. *Acts* 16. 14. Brethren, you have been under the hands of Chriſts Phyſitians ever ſince you were borne; but where is the heart that is broken? all the Phyſick is loſt, the word hath no entrance, it hath ſkinned the wound; and ſeared the outſide indeed; but the hardneſſe of the *heart* is not cured. How long have you been under Phyſick for the curing of your earthlineſſe and vanity? how long have you lien by it for your anger and malice, &c. under the means, yet never the neerer? whoſe hearts are broken? I feare the Phyſick doth not ſoake, it comes no

neerer

neerer then the outſide. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart *Pſal.* 34. 18. why? becauſe their hearts are *open* and broken, and Chriſt and his word comes neere, yea ſo neere that it toucheth them to the quick; But if yee be not *broken* in heart, no Balme, no Phyſick can come neare enough to cure you.

Secondly, *thou canſt never be cured unleſſe Chriſt cure thee*; now Chriſt will never take thee in hand till thou be *broken* in heart. A Phyſitian will not meddle with a *deſperate* cure, ſuch a one who is not capable of Phyſick. Let not any Phyſitian ſaith *Hippocrates* ſet upon a *fruitleſſe* cure. Now it is fruitles to give thee any Phyſick it is fruitleſſe to poure grace into thee, or to vouchſafe pardon to thee; this Phyſick will never heal thee ſo long as thou art not *broken* in heart; and therefore Chriſt ſcorns to take thee in hand. True it is if thou wert *broken* in heart, God would not deſpiſe thee; for the ſacrifice of God is a broken ſpirit; ſo ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *A broken and a contrite heart O God ſhalt thou not deſpiſe*, Pſal. 51. 17. ſo then if thy heart be not yet *broken*, it is yet incurable. Indeed if we conſider Chriſts *abſolute* power, no heart

is uncurable; for he can heale it what ever it bee, for all is at his command. But God doth not go according to his *abſolute* power, but according to his expreſſion and meaning of, and in his word; now the method that God *ſets down* in his word, is thus; *firſt the heart muſt be broken and then it muſt or may be healed*; ſo then ſo long as thou art not *broken* in heart, thou art incurable.

Thirdly, *ſuppoſe Chriſt ſhould begin to heal thee, thou being not broken in heart, wilt alwayes be taking off the plaiſter before thou be cured*; ſometimes God terrifies thee with the law, and then thou pulleſt off that plaiſter; Even like unto a dainty Dame, who having taken phyſick, and feeling it begin to wamble in her ſtomack, puts a feather in her throat to cauſe her to vomit it up before it have its *full* working. And thus many take hopes and comforts and promiſes before the ſet time.

In ſome phyſick, a quarter of an houres difference may coſt one his life; when a man is to be cut of the ſtone and he bee bound hand and foot, yet if he doe but ſtirre or ſtruggle before the Chirurgion hath

hath quite done with him, it is a thouſand to one but he dies for it; ſo they in the ſecond Pſalme had a ſtone in the heart, Chriſt would have cut them for the ſtone, but they would not be bound, they would not endure their cutting, no let us break his bonds aſunder, and caſt away his cords from us, *Pſal.* 2. 3. men cannot be ſmitten at a Sermon, but oh they muſt preſently have comfort; as ſoon as once the phyſick beginnes to make the head to *ake*, and the ſtomack to be ſick, and the man to be exceeding ill, it is a ſigne that the phyſick doth now begin to *worke*; but if this man ſhould deviſe how to vomit it up, or to gliſter it out, he looſeth all the *benefit* of the phyſick; keep this plaiſter on as long as thou canſt, if ever thou meane to be healed. If the wound be throughly whole, the plaiſter will fall away of it ſelf. Should a man have never ſo good a plaiſter and ſhould every foot be taking it off, it would never do him any good. If God have ſhot an arrow into thy heart, bind the plaiſter to the ſore, and let it there reſt till the *malignity* of the ſore and venom of the wound be put out. But if thou be not broken in heart, it is in vain to miniſter or

to

to ſay any thing unto thee, becauſe thou wilt not abide the phyſick within thee, nor ſuffer the gripes that thou muſt ſuffer if ever thou be *healed*. And therefore all you that are *broken* in heart, in any *meaſure* or *manner*, be of good cheer, the Lord will heal you; he healeth the broken in heart.

See here theſe particulars.

Firſt, *for the ſeaſonableneſſe of it*, when it is a ſeaſonable time to be healed, and that is when the heart is in *need*, and it is in need when it is broken; as a man is in need of meat, when hee is hungry; ſo a man is in need of meat, when hee is broken in heart: God will give thee that which thou needeſt, and that in *due* ſeaſon ſayes *Auguſtine*. In an *acceptable time have I heard thee*, Eſay 49.8. God looks when it will be moſt *ſeaſonable* to give grace, and then he gives it; therefore wait, never complaine of Gods delaying his hand; if he do, it is but for a *better* ſeaſon; I have need of healing *already* ſayeſt thou; but if God do not *yet* heal thee, then thou muſt know it is not yet *ſeaſonable*, and the more need thou art in, the better welcome is help when it commeth.

Secondly,

Secondly, *when it is most profitable for thee*; when he is broken in heart, it will do him good to be healed; but if God should heale thee before, it would hurt thee; when the *Corrosive* hath wrought out his worke, then it is good to have a *Cordiall*; now the Cordiall will help the man; but if the Physitian should give him a Cordiall first, it would helpe the *disease*, and endamage the man. Comfortable Cordials before the time have bin the damnation of many soules. Oh thou wouldst fain have comfort for thy soule; what before the *Corrosive* hath eaten out the sin? thou wilnest thine own poyson. If God let thee wait for thy healing, understand that he doth it for thy good; only let his *Corrosives* work their full course, and then he will heal thee. Wait on the Lord saith *David* Psal. 27. 14. give not over waiting how long so ever it be, and he will heal thee assuredly when it shall be best for thee.

Thirdly, *in punto, even just in the very nick of thy brokennesse in heart will his healing come*. It is well observed that the word in the originall is put in the participle indifferent to any time, whether past, present,

present or to come, he doth not set down *any* time, because he will doe it *punctually*, just at the pinch, when thou art *broken* in heart: Oh then if thou be not yet healed, know then that thou art not yet come to this *punctum*, but when thou art come to it, then thou shalt be healed. What if thou dost lie under the heavy and frowning hand of God? doe not shake it off, but kisse that rod, & humble thy self the more: Sometimes God lets a *broken heart* shake off his hand a little too soon, sometimes again he will not let them. *David* would faine have shaken it off, but he could not; God would not let him. Lord rebuke me not in thine anger, saith hee, &c. *Psal.* 38. 1, 2. How did he know that Gods arrowes stuck in him fast? It seemes that he had been pulling at them; he would faine have had them out, he would have been comforted all on the suddaine, but he could not; God would not let him. Lord rebuke me not (sayes he) in thine indignation, &c. Rebuke me as much as thou wilt, but let it not be in thine *indignation*; chasten me as much as thou wilt, but let it not be in thy heavy displeasure. Oh pluck out thine arrowes, take off thy hand;

I pluck at them, but they stick fast; I shake and rub to get off thy hand, but it presseth me so sore that I cannot get it off. Beloved, it is necessary that some while Gods own people should *bleed* under Gods wrath; for by this means the corruption of sin is purged out. Thus you see in some God will not let them shake off his hand; others, if they will needs have it off, they shall, that they may afterwards see their own folly. Thus many a poor childe of God, in conflict of conscience and sense of Gods wrathfull displeasure, scrapes comfort too soon, and God lets them take it before he gives it: he would have had them first *throughly* cured, but they were loth to be humbling their soules so long: but see the event of it, the sore is only skinned over, and at the last the wound it breaks forth afresh, and then it may be they lie seven years together and get no comfort, yea sometimes twenty yeares, yea, I have known some that have lived so thirty yeares. Now they may thank their own folly; for if they would have been ruled by Christ, and been humbled all together at the first, they might have escaped this scouring; but now they

repent

repent it every veine in their hearts, and can hardly claw it off untill death. I call these the children of God, because they have lyen a long while under Gods hand, and yet still cry after God, it is a signe they are his children; for Gods children are many times in affliction a long while; see it in *Job*, &c. Neither can I belive, but that all those that lie sundry yeares on this fashion still crying after God, are the children of God; or at the least, it is so to be hoped: for if they were reprobates, and had shaken off Gods hand, pluckt out his arrows, and scraped after comfort; he would either let them fall into a perpetuall fools-paradise of presumption or security, or else let them moulder away in despaire, not caring to seek after God in the means at all. And therefore, beloved, pluck not out Gods arrowes too soon: I speak not to all, for some will not pluck them out when they should; but I speak to all such as are over-hastie for to get Cordials before the Corrosive have had his full working. If men be never so little humbled, reformed, or wrought upon, presently they think they be in very good case: the very Heathen could say, we are com-

commonly deceived with seeming vertue and grace; and hence it is that wicked men are humbled by halves. They think they are throughly humbled, when their hearts are broken by halves; they think they are broken in heart. And as a stick that is half in the water, and half above the water, seems to be broken or bent in the middest; so these men when they are half in their sinnes, and half out, seem to themselvs to be broken-hearted: But if the stick were either al in the water, or al out, would appeare as it is: it seemes to be broken, when as it is not: so, many being half in their sinnes, and half out, seem to be *broken-hearted*, when indeed they are not.

But (beloved) before I can give you the *healing* here in this Text, it is good reason that I examine you whether you be broken in heart, or no. *Prognostica præcedunt Therapeutican*, sayes *Argasius*; Prognostiques, and telling the signes and symptomes of the disease, are before the healing of the disease. When we believe a thing to be so, we have a proverb to say *'tis a signe 'tis so*. Doest thou say thou art broken in heart? 'Tis a signe 'tis so, thy

thy carriage is so mortified; A signe this so, thy communication is so heavenly; A sign this so, thy companions are so holy, &c. If a man cannot cast thy water on this fashion, thou art not broken in heart. And therefore *Signa tibi dicam*, &c. I will help thee with the signs and symptomes of a broken heart, *that so thou maiest examine thy selfe*.

The signes I reduce to these two heads.

First, *a breaking from sin*, as a rotten member is broken from the body, so that the heart is then said to be broken indeed, when it is broken off from sin.

Secondly, *a breaking in it selfe*, so that the heart is said to be broken when it is broken with sorrow and selfe-denyall, so that nothing can peice it up againe, but the favour of God. These two made up a broken heart, and therefore they shall be the heads of examination.

First, then doe *thy sins goe thick away from thee*? when the cold is once broken, wee use to say, now it is going away, not in the rhume as before, but in thick fleam. If thou be *broken* in heart, then thy pride, thy

thy earthlinesse, thy selfe-love, thy deadnesse to good duties, and all thy sins go thick from thee. It may be thou hast some poares in thy heart, and thy sins fall away from thee in the rhume, but if they goe not away from thee in thick fleame, the cold of thy frozen heart is not yet broken. The sins of *Zacheus* were injustice and oppression, &c. but as soone as ever he was *broken* in heart, these sins went away thick from him, not dropping as if he were loth they should part but in great flakes, *Zacheus* stood (saies the text) *and said unto the Lord, behold half of my goods I give unto the poor, &c.* Luke 19. 8. see how his sins went away; every word voids thick fleam.

First, he stood; before he clymed and gazed after Christ, but being broken in heart, he stood ready prest to doe what soever Christ would command him. Secondly, *he said unto Christ*; before Christ might have said unto him what he would; what cared hee? but now that he is broken in heart, here is hardly a word that Christ said unto him of any such matter yet he said to Christ.

Thirdly, *Behold* before his behold

was carnall, hee did what he did to be seen of men, if ever he gave ought, he loved that men should behold, but now all his care was that Christ would behold it.

Fourthly, *I give.* Before hee thought, I *will* give was enough, I will give when I dy, I will build hospitals when I am dead; but now that he is *broken* in heart he gives it *forth-with.*

Fifthly, *the halfe of my goods*; before he counted a penny or a farthing to a poore body, a great matter, a great dole, if given *now* and *then*; but now that he is broken in heart, the *halfe* and not only of the *superfluitie*, but also of *Esaus* very *substance* and goods, as it is in the originall, I give to the poor, not as men commonly doe, light come, light goe; it may be they feast their rich neighbours, but hee gives halfe his substance to the poor Saints of God.

Sixthly, *And if I have taken any thing wrongfully*, though it were not much; *If I* have taken *any thing*, though not from the rich and great ones, but from *any*, rich or poore, young or old, stranger or not stranger, no matter *who*; if I have taken any

any thing from *any* man by *false accusation*, not only against Law, where the Law binds me to restitution, but if I have taken any thing by *forged cavillation*, though the Law will bouster me out, yet I restore him; he did not say, *I give him*, as many will do, calling that which should properly be called restitution for wrong, a *gift* I give, say they; he sayes not so; but he casteth off the thought of a gift, and doth what he doth by way of *restitution*.

Seventhly, *If I have taken any thing*; before he could swallow down the known wrongs that he did; but now that he is *broken* in heart, he makes amends for the wrongs which *peradventure* he did not, to be sure, If I have taken, *I* restore, his restitution goes *absolute*; although his wrongs goe upon *ifs*, I *restore* him saies he; and that not nigardly or scantly, or no more then needs must, but *four-fold*. Thus he reasons; now he is *broken* in heart; his sins go *thick* away from him.

The text but even now called him *little Zacheus*, before he had seen Christ; *merito adhuc pusillus quia nondum viderat Christum*. Justly might he be said to be

little Zacheus, because then he had not seen Christ; but as soon as ever hee had seen Christ whom he had wronged by those wrongs; as soon as ever he was broken in heart, he became a great repenter, his sins ran thick away from him. As soon as the boyle is broken out comes the matter; As soon as the vein is broken, out comes the blood; true it is a drop of blood may come though the veine be not broken; if the finger be but rac'd a few drops may come, but if the veine be once *broken*, out comes the blood thick and threefold; If thou dost but prop off thy sins now and then, thy heart was never *broken*; for if thou wast once *broken* in heart, thy reformation would come *apace*, thy repentance and thy amendement would come thick and threefold; but if we preach and exhort, and yet see but thin reformation in thee, as a sight or so, thou was never yet *broken* in heart: if thy heart be yet full of thy *self-love*, full of thy pride, lusts, &c. if thy affections bee yet full of earthly desires, worldly delights, vaine hopes, carnall feares; if thy backe be yet full of thy garish and humerous apparell, thy heart is not yet *broken*; why? because

the

the filthy matter runs not out.

Zacheus when he was *broken* in heart, his *corruptions ran out apace*; both his unreadineſſe to good duties, and his deadneſſe and dulneſſe to holy duties: Chriſt need not ſay much unto him; for he ſaid unto Chriſt, his deſire of the credit of the world ran out, for he gave the halfe of his goods to the poore; his backwardneſſe and delaying ran out; for he made preſent diſpatch, *I* give, his very ſecret and unknowen iniquities ran out, *if I have taken*, &c. All his ſins ran thick away from him. why? becauſe *a broken heart can hold no ſin*; this is the firſt ſigne of a broken heart *from ſin*; if it be broken from its ſinfull courſe.

The ſecond is, *if it be broken from its wildneſſe*; the Hauk is then broken when it is made fit for the Lurk, and the colt is *broken* when made fit for the ſaddle; if he be not *broken*, he will not be willing the rider ſhall come on his back; man is borne like a wild Aſſe colt, *Job.* 11. 12. ſo thou waſt borne, and ſo thou haſt been, and art thou not as yet broken from it? if thou be broken in heart, then thy heart is tame to every commandment, to every truth

truth, and thy affections are tame to every precept. *It is Calvins* ſimilitude, thou art not yet (ſaith hee) fit for Gods ſaddle, if thou let the Devill, the world, or any luſt ride thee, thou muſt be broken from thy wildneſſe, or elſe thou art not broken in heart; it may be thou art a little *bridled* from thy luſts, alas ſo thou maieſt be, yet be wild for all that. Beg not like thoſe beaſts *Pſal.* 32. 9. For though they be bridled and held in, yet they are wild ſtill, *Be not like horſe and mule*, ſaith *Ambroſe*, for though they *ſuffer* bit and bridle, yet had they rather be at rack and manger, or at graſſe in the field, they delight not to be ſadled.

Doſt thou not deſpiſe to be curbed by the word, to be bitted by reproof, wouldſt thou not rather be free; God caſteth in good motions into thy heart, and thou caſteth them out, and they vaniſh; God puts in good purpoſes into thy heart, but thou flingeſt them off, and doſt not fulfill them, like a wild horſe that flings off his rider. Thou canſt not be croſt a little but preſently thou art wild with choller and anger; thy fleſh and blood cannot endure it, and doſt thou yet ſay that thou art

broken

broken in heart? no, no; thou wast born a wild Asse Colt, and so thou art still. Thou wert borne a wild olive, and so thou art still. Thou was never yet *broken* in heart, never yet broken from sin; if thou wert broken from thy wildnesse, then every exhortation would tame thee; then thou wouldst be glad to bee reprooved, and controuled by the word; Thou wouldst leap at *every* commandement, were it never so strict; But if thou count it precisenesse and too much strictnesse to be *holy* and *zealous*, I say thou art yet but a wild colt. Oh my brethren we have many amongst us who are like *Ishmael*, who was a wild man, *Gen.* 16. many wild men, who pray wildly, and thinke wildly, and heare wildly; their hearts are wild gadding hearts; while the word is preaching, they follow their own imaginations.

Darest thou *venture* upon any sin against the Gospell of Christ, and darest thou *live* in it till thou art a wicked Bedlam, The *Psalmist* brings all such in as if they were mad Bedlams, saying; *why doe the heathen so furiously rage, &c.* Christ would have bound them, but they forsooth were too wild, they would not be bound; but

ſay they let us break his bonds, and ſling off his cords; they will not bee bound to ſuch ſtrictneſſe dareſt thou ſweare and lie and covet, and be drunk, &c? alas man man thou art in a mad vaine. Dareſt thou break the ſabbath; live in thy luſts, &c. a fury hath taken thee, thou art a mad man; God muſt *breake* that wild heart of thine, elſe thou canſt not be tamed, it may be thou art *bridled* from ſin; but doſt thou bridle thy ſelf, if not, thou art wild for all the bridling thou haſt: you never ſaw a horſe bridle himſelf; no, no, it is wilde, peradventure thou doſt bridle thy ſelfe when thou art *not much* tempted; but if thou beeſt *broken* in heart, thou wilt refraine all provocations whatſoever. *I will keep my mouth, &c.* Pſal. 39. 1. while the Devill was before him, as *Hierom* expounds it, or while *Shimei* was before him to tempt him with wicked reproaches and diſgrace full ſpeeches, as *Baſil* and *Theodoret* expound it, then would *David* keep his tongue as with a bridle when he was greatly tempted to ſin. Here then is all the triall; canſt thou bridle thy ſelfe from ſin when thou art tempted to ſin? if thou bee *broken* in heart, thou canſt; but

if

if thou canst not, thou art wild unto this day. The wild beasts are tame enough till a prey comes before them, and so thou maist be tame when temptations are *down*; but are thou tame when a temptation is before thee. This is a second signe of brokennesse of heart if thou bee broken from thy wildnesse.

Thirdly, *if thou bee broke in heart, then thou art broken from thy pride, and thou wilt stoop to Gods word in all things.* A broken heart is an humble heart, I dwell with him saith God *Esay.* 57. 15. pride is the *root* of all sin; what is the reason that any dare sin, but because they think better of themselves in their sins then they do deserve? for did a man but thinke he were accursed and a damned wretch in sinning against God, he durst never sin, or did a man feele that *every* sin makes a man *filthy*: yea more filthy then a toad; did a man feele his owne damned condition, he durst not *live* in sin? a man thinkes better of himselfe then hee deserves whensoever he sins against God. *Heare and give eare and be not proud, for the Lord hath spoken it,* Jer. 13. 15. If the Lord *speake*, and thou doe not *heare* and *obey*, thou art proud

proud, Oh but I am not proud, then thinkest thou, for I will beare the poorest body in the street when they speake to me: yea and I will and do give the wall to my betters, wilt thou so? wilt thou give man the wal, and take the wall of God? is not this pride? *sweare not* sayes God; yet thou wilt take the wall of that commandement, and sweerest. *Let not the sun go downe upon thy wrath* sayes God; thou takest the wall of that commandement too; and canst remember an ill turn a moneth after, &c. This is execrable and abominable pride. Thou seekest after thy profits and pleasures more then after the glory of God. I cannot live else, sayes one; I cannot be merry else, sayes another; and I must tell a lie now and then, and must suffer bousing and swearing in my house, or else I cannot live. Thou proud wretch, what must thy mirth and thy credit perke above the commandement of Christ? The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seeke after God, *Psal.* 10. 4. It is wicked pride indeed when thou seekest thy selfe more then God. I tell thee the word hath not broken the heart untill it hath broken the neck

of

of this pride of thine; never tell me that thou art not proud in thy apparell; if a servant goe never so meanly in apparell, yet he is proud if he obey not all his Masters *lawfull* and *good* commandments, never tell me thou bowest to God or thou kneelest in prayer to God, cluck & crouch, bow and bend thou never so much, yet thou art proud, if every corruption of thine will not yeild to *every* commandement of God; thou art not broken in heart; for if thou wert broken in heart thou wouldst stoop to *all* Gods commandements. Dost thou mock at preaching, &c. tush, thou wilt not be so precise, if ever thou be one of *his*, thou wilt not only obey him, but also be circumspect in *all* thy obedience; nay if thou be *broken* in heart, thou wilt not only stoope to every commandement of God, but also count it thine honour and glory, though it be the meanest office in his service. *Thou art my glory* sayes *David*, *David* that was broken from his pride, counted it his glory to obey God, his glory to serve God, yea his glory to be reproached for his sake, Thou art not *broken* in heart till thou count it thine *excellency* to serve God,

We use to say such a ones excellency is in his learning or wit, &c. but he is too *precise* and too *holy* as if it were not a mans excellency to be pure and zealous, and to serve God; But I tell thee if thou count it not thine *honor* to be forward for God, and to be nicknamed for Christ, thine excellency to lie in this that thou art godly and heavenly, thou art a proud fool; when *John Husse* was to write upon the Epistle of Saint *James*, he counted it such an high office of dignity that he was confounded at his owne indignity, saying unto God, *Hei mihi laudare te contremisco*, he counted it such an honour to doe any thing for God that he was ashamed at his owne vildnesse. O my brethren God is called the *excellency* of *Jacob*; it was not their *valour* nor *wisedome*, but *this* was their excellency, that *God was their God*; thy riches are proud riches if thy excellency lie in them more then in God; if thou dost not go about *every* commandement as thine *excellency*, thy obedience is proud. This is a third signe of a heart broken from sin if it be broken from its pride.

A Funerall SERMON

Preached by

That laborious and faithfull Messenger of CHRIST,

WILLIAM FENNER, Sometimes Fellow of *Pembroke Hall* in *Cambridge*, and late Minister of [illegible] in *Essex*.

BRITISH MUSEUM

A FUNERAL SERMON.

ISAI. 57. 1.

The righteous periſh, and no man layeth it to heart, mercifull men are taken away, none conſidering that the righteous are taken away from the evill to come.

IN the end of the former chapter the Prophet reproveth the *ſpeciall* ſinne of Idol ſhepheards who followed their own pleaſures and profits, not regarding their flock. Now he

he reproves the generall ſin of ſecurity in the people, and namely in this, that whereas *the righteous periſh, yet no man layeth it to heart*; and mercifull men are taken away, none conſidering, &c.

This verſe is a complaint of the Prophet touching the people in generall, for that they conſidered not the *Iudgements* of God upon them in taking away the righteous from among them.

In the words themſelves we are to conſider.

Firſt, the *work of the Lord*, viz. the righteous periſheth and merciful men are taken away.

Secondly, *the peoples ſin in not conſidering it*, not regarding this work of the Lord, which is, that the righteous may be delivered from the evill to come.

By *righteous* is here meant not ſuch as are *legally* righteous by the workes of the law; for ſo no man is righteous, but by *righteous* is here meant ſuch as are *Evangelically* righteous, by the righteouſneſſe of faith in the Goſpell.

Periſheth, that is, from the *earth*; for otherwiſe the righteous *periſh* not.

No man conſidering, that is, no man lamenting,

menting; mourning, or grieving for the losse of them.

The first thing then to be considered, is from the first part; and it is plaine out of the words of the text, *That all men must dye*; even the most holy and most righteous; for they are all subject to the stroak of bodily death as well as the wicked; There is no remembrance saith *Solomon* of the wise more then of the fool; and how dyeth the wise man? even as the fool, *Eccles.* 2. 16. so *Zacha.* 1. 5. Your fathers, where are they? and the Prophets, doe they live for ever? so that we see *Prophets* and *fathers* dye as well as other men; yea those *Worthies* recorded in the Scripture, *Noah, Abraham, David, &c.* they are all gone the same way, they are all dead.

The first reason is, because *it is appointed unto all men once to dye*, and after that comes the judgement, *Heb.* 9. 27. God hath thus decreed it, and therefore it must be so.

Secondly, because *all men and women are of the dust*; and therefore must return to the dust again; dust thou art, saith God, and unto dust thou shalt return, *Gen.* 3. 19.

Thirdly, because, *all have sinned*, even the most righteous man; now the *wages* of sin is death, *Rom.* 6. 23. the most righteous man must dye.

Fourthly because, *as death came into the world by sin*, Rom. 5. 12. *so sin was got out of the world by death*; and therefore it is needfull that the righteous die, that so they may be freed from sin.

Object. But some may object and say hath not *Christ abolished death? why then do the righteous die.*

Answ. I answer he hath abolished death, as he hath abolished sin; now he hath not taken sin quite away from us, for we see it doth still remain in us; neither hath he quite abolished death from the righteous, for we see they all *dye*; but hee abolished the *dominion* of sin, so that it doth no longer *raign* in us; and so hee hath taken away the *dominion* of death, so that it doth not rage as a Tyrant over us, so that it is not hurtfull unto us as a punishment, but as a means to convey us into a better life. Christ hath taken away the *sting* both of sin and death, though not the things themselves away from us; yet he will one day free us from them both; so then the righteous,

eous muſt ſuffer death as well as the wicked, though not in the ſame kind.

Let no man then look to be exempted from death for his righteouſneſſe, nor from any outward miſeries that may befall the ſons of Adam; nay if we are the ſervants of Chriſt, we muſt look for a greater ſhare in theſe then other men; greater croſſes, greater afflictions, greater ſickneſſe and harder pangs of death do oft befall the righteous, as it did unto this our brother, who though he were old and ſtricken in yeers, yet the pangs of death were ſtrong upon him. Thoſe whom God will make heires of *Eternall* life, he ſuffers them to have a *greater* portion in theſe afflictions. But the wicked are fat and full, and die with their bones full of marrow, as *Job* ſpeakes; they commonly have little ſickneſſe and an eaſie death; but the godly do ordinarily undergoe greater pangs; let none therefore think that for his righteouſneſſe he ſhall be free.

Secondly, *conſider we here how few amongſt us have learned this Arithmetique, namely to number our dayes*, and they are but ſhort, even a ſpan long; who is there almoſt that thinkes on death? who pre-

pares himselfe for it? and yet all, even the most *righteous* must die; for God hath placed that fiery blade of death at the entrance into the Paradise of heaven, so that none can enter before they taste of death, and all must taste of it, yea the most righteous are not exempted from the stroak of death. This then should teach us to labour to draw our hearts from the love of this present life, and what can better perswade us and wean us from the love of this world, then a due consideration of death? wee know we must all *die*, and therefore we should prepare our selves for it. If any prophane person amongst us knew that this night must be his last night, and that now hee had no longer to live, would not this amaze him and make him bethink himselfe and to prepare for death? If rich coveteous men which spend the whole course of their life in providing for the things of this life, did truely consider of death, and that their end draweth nigh, would they doe as they do, when this life and all the things of this life, and all our joyes and pleasures of this world shall shortly have an end? for when death comes, they shall all be taken from us, or rather

rather we from them. Oh how excellent a thing is it then for us to be drawne from the things of this life unto a due consideration of death, and of those heavenly loyes and happineſſe to come! Oh you that look for theſe things, what manner of men ought you to be in *holy* life and converſation?

Thirdly, ſeeing wee all muſt die, and this preſent life muſt come to an end, this ſhould teach us to prepare our ſelves for a better life; to provide for a ſurer building, a better eſtate which ſhall never periſh. Philoſophers who were but heathen men, could meditate on *death*, ſetting it alwayes before their eyes. But this is not enough for us that are *Chriſtians*; wee cannot truly prepare our ſelves for it unleſſe we firſt build a ſurer foundation in providing for a better life, which ſhall never have an end; and this no Heathen or wicked man can ever do. Oh how wofull would that meſſage be unto a wicked man, that was brought unto good King *Hezekiah*, Come, ſet thy houſe in order, for thou muſt die, and not live; and why ſhould it be terribl unto him? ſurely becauſe he hath no hope of a better life, he hath not provi-

ded for a better habitation. Consider then with what comfort thou couldst entertain this message, with what comfort canst thou meet with death? for he is no Christian that cannot in some measure willingly meet with death, for by it we passe unto a better life: for as this our brother spake often, hee that would have comfort in death, must look beyond death, he must not fix his eyes on the *terrors* of death, but he must look beyond to that glorious *inheritance* to which wee are passing through death, and there shall he behold his Saviour puting forth his hand ready to receive him; there shall he see the blessed Saints and Angels whose company he shall enjoy, besides an infinite heap of loyes and happinesse that is prepared for him also. O my beloved, nothing will make us willingly to entertaine the message of death, but only the comforts of the life to come. Oh let us labour then for these comforts that so we may be provided against death; were it not a foolishnesse for a man who being a tennant at will, and shortly to be turned out of his house, never to take care for another until he is cast out of doors? Beloved we are all tennants at will and we are very

very shortly to be cast out of our dwelling houses of clay, and shall we not provide for a surer habitation? Death is at hand, and our life must shortly have an end; let us therefore labour to be assured of a better life, when this is ended, that so with comfort we may meet with death.

Now we come unto the second point which is here to be considered, taken from the complaint of the Prophet that the people did not consider nor lay it to heart, *viz.* the death of the righteous, whence I note, that *The death & losse of good men must be laid to heart as a speciall cause of grief and sorrow.*

We ought justly to be grieved at the death of a *righteous* man, when God taketh him from amongst us. How did the Prophet *Jeremy* and the people lament the death of that good King *Josiah*, 2 Chron. 35. 23. so devout men made great lamentation for the death of *Stephen*, Act. 8. 2. so all *Israel* lamented the death of *Moses* Deut. 34. 8. And *Joash* the King of *Israel* weept for the death of the Prophet *Elisha*, 2 Kings 13. 14. and thus wee should lament and sorrow for the death of any righteous man, yet not in respect of themselves, as if their case were worse

now then before, for they are now more happy.

But first, *in regard of Gods glory* whereof they were instruments to set it forth; for since they were taken away, Gods glory is impaired; because there are the fewer left which doe truly serve and worship him; for as *David* saith, *the dead praise not the Lord*, &c. Psal. 115. 17. so then they being dead, do not praise the Lord among the faithfull on earth any longer.

Secondly, *in regard of the great losse that others have by their death*, who have alwayes received much good by them in their life; for the godly doe so order and behave themselves in all their wayes that they doe good wheresoever they come; therefore when they die, it must needs be a great losse unto such who might if they had lived, been bettered by them.

Thirdly, *we ought to lament the death of the righteous in regard of the evill to come*; for while they live, they are as a wall about us to keep Gods judgements from us; If there had been but *ten* righteous men in *Sodome*, it had not been destroyed *Gen.* 18. 32. If there be a messenger one among a thousand

thouſand, ſaith *Elihu*, to ſhew unto man his uprightnes, then is God gracious unto him *Job* 33.23. Run ye to and fro in the ſtreets of *Jeruſalem* ſaith God, and ſee if you can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgement, and ſeeks the Lord, and I will pardon it, *Jer.* 5.1. ſo that if there had been but one *righteous* man among the people in that city, the Lord would have ſpared them even for that ones ſake; and therefore the Lord ſpeaking of the righteous, ſaith, I will faſten him as a naile in a ſure place, he ſhall be as a glorious throne unto his fathers houſe. *Eſay.* 22. 23. Oh conſider then what a loſſe we have when the *righteous* dye, we are like to periſh, when the naile that was in the ſure place is remooved, cut downe and falles; for then the burden that was upon it, ſhall be cut off, *Eſay*, 22. 25. You therefore of this Congregation, conſider, and lament for this your loſſe, in that this *good* man is taken from among you; for who knowes whether God ſpared this congregation even for this good mans ſake? for it is the righteous only that God reſpects, and for their ſakes he will ſpare a whole people; therefore ſurely as *Solomon* ſaith, the

righteous

righteous is better then his neighbour, yea though never so poore and despised in the eyes of the world, yet are they *precious* in Gods account; *when I make up my Jewels* (saith God) *I will spare them* Mala. 3. 17. so that the righteous are Gods *Jewels*, the excellent of the earth, are precious in Gods sight, and have we not great cause then to lament for the losse of such?

Vse. Seeing then it becommeth all Gods children to lament the death of the righteous; O how farre then are all such from the spirit of God, who are so farre from lamenting, that on the contrary they rejoyce at the death of the godly man, because he stood in their way? they could not follow their workes of darknesse as they would, but hee hindered them, he stood in their light, they could not run on in sin and wickednesse, but he would be reproving, admonishing, and telling them of their faults, and this makes them long for the good mans end, and to rejoyce in it when it doth come; these doe not consider that when the righteous is taken from the earth, then they lie open unto the judgemens of God; But as the Sodomites

mites thrust out just *Lot* out of their city, that so Gods vengeance might fall the sooner upon them; for till he was gone, the Lord would not destroy them *Gen.* 19. 21. Even so doe these men desire to be rid of the righteous, and rejoyce when they are taken from them, not considering that they are open to Gods vengeance which hangeth over their heads ready to devoure them.

We ought then to be most grieved for the death of the righteous, when any of the Saints are taken away by death; Oh what a comfort is a righteous man to the children of God? what a feeling of grace is there in such a one? what comfortable words come there from the mouth of such men? how full of comfortable speeches was this poore man alwayes ministring comfort to those that came to visit him? what a losse is this then unto us? it is more then if thousands of the wicked had gone together, and shall wee not mourne for the losse of such a one? If one of our family or friends dye, wee can mourne for them, and good reason, and shall wee not mourne for the losse of one of Gods Saints, one of the spirituall family, one

of

of our fellow members.

In this then examine thy ſelfe how it is with thee; when thou heareſt of any of the faithfull that are taken away, art thou greived for it, doſt thou lament and mourn for it? if thou doeſt not, ſurely thou art no true Chriſtian; for the children of God cannot chooſe but lay it to heart and lament, when any of the righteous is taken from among them. As *Iſrael* lamented the death of *Samuel*. 1 *Sam.* 25. 1.

Now concerning the ſin of the people in not regarding nor laying it to heart, this was a great ſin of *ſecurity* in them, in that they did as it were reſt on their pillowes and cryed peace unto themſelves, notwithſtanding Gods judgements upon them, in taking away the righteous, and freeing them from the evill to come, wee note that,

Doctr. *When God will bring any great judgement upon a People or Nation, he will ordinarily take away his faithfull ſervants from among them, that ſo they may be freed from the evill to come.* Thus good *Joſiah* muſt periſh in his young yeares, that ſo he might not be taken with the evill to come; I will gather thee unto thy fathers ſaith God, and thou

thou ſhalt goe to thy grave in peace, and thy eyes ſhall not ſee all the evill that I will bring upon this place. 2 *King.* 22. 20. So when God told *Abraham* of the bondage and captivity whereunto he would bring his poſterity, he ſaith *thou ſhalt go to thy fathers in peace* Gen. 15. 13. And thus it was with the ancient Father Saint *Auguſtine*; when the cruell *Vandals* beſieged his city, he prayed that the Lord would either take him away, or cauſe them to leave the ſiege; and the Lord heard him, and tooke him away, and preſently after the *Vandals* deſtroyed the city. So *Luther* writing upon this text, ſaith that the Lord after his death would bring great affliction upon *Germany*, and two yeares after it ſo fell out indeed. Thus ordinarily God takes away his ſervants from the evill to come.

See here the mercy of God unto his children in that hee takes them away from among the wicked, he calls them out of this world that they may not partake of the evill to come; ſhall any one then think it a curſe to be taken away betimes, in his young yeares? nay happy is hee that is taken away from theſe miſerable and fearfull

fearfull times wherein the judgement of God, for our sins hangeth over our heads, and is ready every day to seize upon us.

Secondly, seeing that God when he meanes to bring any heavy judgement upon a people, doth *ordinarily* take away the righteous from the evill to come, this shewes that when the righteous are taken from amongst us, wee are certainly to expect some judgement of God upon us. For these are they which stood in the gap and kept off the fire of Gods wrath from us, that it should not consume us: but now being gone, wee lie open to the judgements of God; and therefore when any righteous men are taken from us, the losse of them ought to drive us to repentance, least Gods judgements come presently upon us and consume us, therefore we must forsake our sins and evill wayes, and performe new obedience unto God, so will he be mercifull unto us, yea he will bee a shield of defence unto us, and a wall of fire about us, and hee will turne away his judgements from us.

Beloved in the Lord wee are here assembled

ſembled to perform this laſt Chriſtian duty of burial to the Saint of God now deceaſed, whoſe ſoule I am as certainly perſwaded is at reſt with Chriſt in glory, as I am ſure his body is in this coffin. When I conſider thoſe excellent graces that were in him, his great *knowledge* in the word of God, his *love, zeale, patience and humility*; when I conſider his excellent *gifts* in comforting, exhorting, admoniſhing, with his heavenly gift of prayer, &c. and withall conſider that he was unlettered, hee could neither write nor read, I cannot but call to mind that in the *Acts.* 4. 13. where it is ſaid of the Prieſt and Phariſees that they ſeeing the boldneſſe of the Apoſtles how they anſwered and ſpake, perceiving them to be unlearned and ignorant men, they knew that they had been with Ieſus: Even ſo may we know that this our brother had been with Ieſus: not in the fleſh, but in the ſpirit, and that from him he received theſe things, that *book-learning* could never have taught him; for he was a good man and full of the holy Ghoſt, as it is ſaid of *Barnabas*. Truly verifying that of the Apoſtle that God hath choſen the poore of this world, that they

they ſhould be rich in faith; he was a true follower of Chriſt, of whom it is ſaid hee went about doing good; ſo this Diſciple of Chriſt did good whereſoever he came; how many by him have been ſtirred up, comforted and admoniſhed and quickened unto good duties, feeding them with the lips of knowledge who fed him with bodily food? how often have I my ſelf through him been ſtirred up to good duties? how often have I been refreſhed and comforted in my heavineſſe by this poore man! ſo lively did he beare the Image of God in him, that me thought Chriſt Jeſus walked in him alive upon the earth; how much true ſervice, ſincere obedience, fervent and faithfull prayer had the Lord out of that poore cottage wherein he lived? If ever there were a true child of *Abraham*, and an heire to the promiſe, this was hee; if ever there were among us a true *Iſraelite* in whom there was no guil, this was hee; If ever there were amongſt us a true Chriſtian that ſhined as a light to thoſe amongſt whom he lived, this was hee; If ever there were amongſt us a poor man rich in faith, this was hee. In his life he was a patterne to all that knew him, ſo contented

contented with his estate, so diligent in the duties of his calling whilst health suffered; In sickness untill death whilst speech continued, so comfortable that I never came to him, but I went away bettered by him. O how did hee exhort and stirre up all those that came to visit him, to hold out constantly unto the end, to grow and increase in those good beginnings which they had made? how often and how excellently would he speake of the benefits which wee have by Christ, even the pardon of sin, more like a Divine then a common Christian, and so feelingly did hee expresse the certaine pardon of his owne sin, even the sweete assurance thereof, that it did my heart good to hear him. Often did he deplore the state of these evill times, in which we live, from which the Lord hath now taken him away; Often did hee with teares bewaile the state of this congregation, and their unfruitfulnesse under the ministry of the word. How did hee even with teares pray for his enemies? he had some enimies, but they were such as his piety, religion and care to keep a good conscience made enimies unto him, touching whom I must

ſay that which without trembling I cannot ſpeak, that as they refuſed his ſociety while he lived, and ſought to thruſt him from among them, ſo I feare that where he now is, they ſhall never come except they repent. O it is a fearfull thing to hate a man for his religion and piety; but ſuch was his love and compaſſion towards them, that he did often with teares lament their eſtate and pray for them. At the mention of death he would ſtill repeat the point not long ſince delivered; that *he that would have comfort in death, muſt goe beyond death*; even to that glorious inheritance to the which we are paſſing through death? and never in my life did I ever ſee any man ſo comfortably and contentedly adreſſe himſelf to encounter with death as he did. O ſaid he, this is the time that I have long waited for; and as the pangs of death grew neerer, ſo uſed he the more comfortable ſpeeches, ſaying with *Paul*, I deſire to be diſſolved and to be with Chriſt; now ſhall I ſee my ſweet Saviour whom I have longed for; and when death was even upon him, he ſaid come Lord Jeſus come quickly, and ſo with admirable patience endured the pangs of death after

prayer

prayer with him when his ſpeech began to faile; I exhorted him now to look up to his Redeemer, who was ready to receive him into his Maſters joy; and I ſpake ſomething out of the *Revelations*, touching the happy eſtate of thoſe that die in the Lord, adding further that all this comfort we have by Chriſt, He anſwered with theſe his laſt words which with much difficulty he ſpake; ſaying, bleſſed be his glorious name, bleſſed be his glorious name, and thus this faithfull ſervant of Chriſt and heire of bleſſing, gave up his breath in bleſſing God and died, praiſing that God to whoſe praiſe he had lived. And what ſhould I ſay more but as *David* ſaid of *Abner*, died *Abner* as a fool dieth? died this our brother as a fool, as a worldling, as a wicked man dieth, of whom no reckoning is to be made? no, precious is his death in the eyes of the Lord, and in the eyes of all that fear the Lord, and bleſſed ſhall his memory be, yea all that knew him well, will call him bleſſed. And for my own part ſo often as I ſhall think of his death, and often I muſt think thereon, my ſoul ſhall wiſh and pray, Oh let me die the death of the righteous, and let my laſt end be like unto his *Amen*.

2 AU 58

THE SIGNES OF GODS forsaking a people.

Preached by

That laborious and faithfull Messenger of CHRIST,

WILLIAM FENNER, Sometimes Fellow of *Pembroke Hall* in *Cambridge*, and late Minister of *Rochford* in *Essex*.

Being the last Sermon that he preached.

THE SIGNES OF GOD'S forsaking a people.

THE SIGNES OF GODS forsaking a people.

JER. 14. 9.

And we are called by thy Name; leave us not.

TWo things (Brethren and beloved in Christ Jesus) are intended and expressed by the holy Propher from the first verse to the 13. verse.

There is first a *denomination of a judgement*, and that is dearth or famine from the first verse to the seventh.

Secondly

Secondly, the ſword is threatned to the thirteenth verſe; he will ſend the famine, then the ſword, and he will not bee intreated.

Then in the eighth and ninth verſes we *have the importunate prayer of the Church to turne away theſe judgements*: And the prayer is marvellous ſweet, in confeſſion, where they confeſſe their ſins, and ſeek to God for ſuccour.

Firſt, they deſire God that he would not take his providence from them, *why, ſtayeſt thou but for a night?* verſe the 8, as if they ſhould have ſaid, it is marveilous ſtrange, that thou behaveſt thy ſelf ſo like a *ſtranger*; thou ſeeſt our ſorrowes, and doſt not help us; thou perceiveſt our troubles, and thou regardeſt us not; It is ſtrange, it is ſtrange; that the God of Iſrael ſtands as a man aſtoniſhed; that thou that haſt heretofore received us, ſhouldſt now ſtand as a man amazed and aſtoniſhed, as if thou wert weary of this thy work, and couldſt do no more, as if thou ſhouldſt ſay *Ieruſalem* cannot be ſaved, and *Iudah* cannot be ſuccoured.

Secondly, they deſire that God would not take away his preſence from them; *leave*

leave us not to our selves say they; *let us see thy face*, though we die, yet let it be in thy presence; yea though thou help us not, yet it doth us good to look upon our Saviour, and thou canst help us; and thus you see the arguments wherewith they *presse* the Lord how, sweet they are, *viz.*

First, *thou art the hope of* Israel; Alas if thou forsake us we are all lost; our hope is not in the meanes only; but our hope is in *thee*, leav us not, for thou art the hope of Israel, it is the task that thou hast taken upon thee, leave us not therefore.

Secondly, *thou hast made thy selfe a Saviour*, and now is the time of trouble, therefore now performe what thou hast undertaken.

Thirdly, *thou art in the midst of us*, that is, thou art a great Commander amongst us, alwayes ready to succour us; and wilt thou now see us perish? thou art more neer to us then the Ark in the middest of the Campe, 1 *Sam.* 4. 6. As if they should say he lives in the midst o fus, and will hee not save us?

Fourthly, *we are called by thy name*, and therefore wee have interest in thee, to whom

whom should wives go, but to their husbands? to whom should children go, but to their fathers? to whom should servants go, but to their Masters? to whom then should we go, but to thee our God and Saviour? leave us not therefore and wee will meddle with none but thee.

Secondly, *though God might leave them, yet they beg that he would not*; that is, the *Amen* to their prayers, though thou stand and wilt not help us, yet let us die in thy presence, and this is the great request of the Saints, they desire not to be *left* of God, although God might leave them: whence learne that God might cast off a people.

Israel did feare it, and it is that which they prayed against, God might leav them: I doe not say that God *will* cast off his elect ones eternally, but those in outward covenant. see *Esay* 1. verse 2. &c. *Heare O Heavens, Hearken O Earth, I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against mee. The Oxe knoweth his Owner, and the Asse his Masters Crib, but* Israel *hath not knowen, my People have not understood*, &c. and verse. the seventh; see the judgement; *your cities are burnt with*

with fire, strangers devoure your land in your presence, and it is desolate like the overthrow of strangers.

There is an *outward* Calling, as well as an *effectuall* Calling; God may *reject*; *for many are called, but few chosen* saith our Saviour. My brethren cast your thoughts afarre off, and see what is become of those famous Churches of *Pergamus* and *Thyatira* and the rest mentioned *Rev.* 1. *verse* 11. And who would have thought that *Jerusalem* should have been made an heap of stones and a vagabond people and yet we see God hath forsaken them, shewing us thereby that although God will never forsake his own elect ones, yet hee may forsake such as are in outward covenant with him.

The Lord is said to dis-church or discharge a people *Hosea* 1. 9. there God saith call his name *Loammi* for yee are not my people, and therefore I will not bee your God. And as I may so say, he sues out a bill of divorcement; as it was in the old Law, they that had any thing against their wives, they sued out a bill of *divorcement* against them, and so doth God, see *Hosea.* 2. 2. Plead with thy Mother

ther, tell her shee is not my Spouse nor my beloved; but let her cast away her fornications out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts, lest I make her as at the first, that is, as shee was in Egypt, poore and miserable. As if God should now say to *England*, plead, plead with *England* all yee that are my Ministers in the way of my truth, and say unto her, let her cast away her rebellions, least I leave her as I found her in the day of Captivity and bondage under the blindnesse of popery and superstition.

Ob. But how doth God cast off a people?

Sol. I answer, first when he takes away his *love* and respect from a people; and as his love, so the *token* of his love, which is his Word and Sacraments, the meanes of salvation.

Secondly, when he takes away his *providence*, I meane when he takes downe his *walls*, that is, his *Magistracy* and *Ministry*.

Thirdly, when in stead of *Councelling* there comes in *Bribing*; and in stead of *true teaching* there comes in *daubing* with un-

tempered morter; when God takes away the hedge thereof, *Esay* 5. 5. or the stakes growe rotten and are not renewed then is God going away.

Fourthly, when God takes away the *benefit* of both these helps, they are signes of Gods departure.

Use May God un-church or discharge a People and cast a Nation off? Oh then let this reach us to cast off all *security*; for miseries are nigh at hand in all probability; when wee observe what God hath done for us, all things are *ripe* to destruction, and yet we feare it not, but wee promise to our selves safety, and consider not that *England* is ready to be harrowed, and yet wee cannot entertaine a *thought* of *Englands* desolation; when there are so many Prophesies in it of its destruction, yet wee cannot be perswaded of it, but in our Iudgements it must not be, it must not be *as yet*; as if it were unpossible that God should leave *England*, as if God were a cockering Father over lewd children; God may leave a Nation, and his elect may suffer, and why may not *England*? *Englands* sins are very great, and the greater, because the *meanes* are great, and

and our *warnings* are and have been great; but yet our *mercies* are farre greater; *England* hath been a mirrour of mercies, yet now God may leave it, and make it the mirrour of his justice. Look how God spake to the people that did brag of their temple *Jer.* 7.4. saith God, *Trust not in lying words, saying the Temple of the Lord, this is the Temple of the Lord*; but what saith the Lord by the Prophet in the twelfth and fourteenth verses, *Goe now to my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the beginning, and behold what I did unto it for the wickednesse of my people* Israel, &c. Even so *England*, thou hast the Temple and the Priests; and yet may not God that destroyed *Shiloh*, destroy thee? Goe to *Bohemia*, and from thence to the *Palatinate*, and from thence to other parts of *Germany*; Doe but imagine that you were there or doe but mark what travellers say. Gods Churches are made heapes of stones, and those *Bethels* wherein Gods name was called upon, are now defiled Temples; For Satan and superstition to raigne in. You cannot goe three steps but you shall see the head of a dead man; And goe a little fur-

further, and you shall see the heart pickt out by the foules of the ayre, or some other sad spectacle? and then surely you will say, *Troy* hath been here or there, now are these Churches become desolate, and may not *England*? Doe but goe into their Cities and Townes, and there you may see many compassed about with chaines of Captivity, and every man bemoaning himself. Doe but look under a tree, and there you may see a poor fatherlesse child sending out his breath and crying unto his helplesse Mother, step but a little further, and you shall see the helplesse Wife, the sad Wife bemoaning her Husband, and this is her misery, she cannot die time enough, but shee shall see greater misery, for either she shall (as she thinks) see her little ones dasht against the stones, or tossed upon the Pikes, or if they live, that then they shall be brought up in Popery, and then shee weeps again, and thinks that if her Husband be dead it is well: But it may be he is upon the rack, or put to some other torment, and then she dies an hundred times before she can die. Thus if you can set your soules in their soules stead, and imagine you were

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in their condition, and say; may not this bee the condition of *England*, and who knowes but it may? O my beloved, *bee not high minded, but feare*; for as we have Gods bounnie on the one side, so (for ought I know) we may have his severity on the other side. Pranck not then your selves with foolish imaginations saying, who dare come to hurt *England*? the *Spaniard* hath his hands full, and the *French* are too weak. But beloved be not deluded; who would have thought that *Jerusalem* the Lady city of all Nations; whither the tribes went up to worship, should become a heap of stones and a vagabond people? but yet you see it was, and is to this day; And I pray, why may it not be *Englands* case? Learne therfore, heare, and feare God, for assuredly God can be God without *Englands* prosperity. Doe not say here are many good Christians; doe you think that God is beholding to you for your religion? surely not: For rather then he will preserve such as professe his name, and *yet* hate to be *reformed*; he will raise up of these stones children unto *Abraham*, he will rather go into Turky and say unto them, Thou art my

people, and I will be your God.

But wilt thou let God goe *England*? are you so content, and will you let Christ goe and God goe? O no, no; lay heart and hands upon him as they did upon *Paul*; every one of you lay hold on him and say thou shalt not goe from us, for we are called by thy name, therefore leave us not; And for my part I will pray that he doth not take his leave of us. Doe you thinke that *Rome* will forsake or part with her Gods? no, they will rather loose their lives, and wilt thou let thy God goe O *England*? plead with thy God and let him not depart, but part rather with thy rebellions.

Wee are called by thy name, leave us not.

You see the Church is very importunate to keep God with them, they lay hold on God with Coards of arguments; O thou hope of *Israel*, doe not leave us; they beset God with their prayers, and as it were they watch him at the townes end that he should not goe away, and they say, thou shalt still abide with us, they are importunate that he doe not leave

them, whence obserue, *Doct.* That *it is the importunate desire of the Saints of God, still to keepe God present with them.* They cared not so much for sword or famine, as they did for the losse of Gods presence; O Lord, leave us not say they; this was their prayer; and blame them not; for consider what a griefe it is that God should stand by and not help them, Good Lord (say they) leave us not, wee cannot abide to thinke that God should leave us, much lesse can we endure to feele it or taste it; thus they did, and thus the Saints of God should doe, *Exod.* 33. 14, 15. *Moses* saith *if thy presence goe not with us, carry us not hence*; alas, *Moses* might have gone upon faire termes; yee shall (saith God) possesse the land in peace with prosperity; But what saith *Moses*? though wee might have *Canaan* and all the delights there, yet carry us not hence unlesse thy *presence* goe with us; this is the stay and the strength that he stickes too. So *Psal.* 80. 18, 19. Turne us again O Lord of hosts, make thy face to shine upon us; here is a man, a *David*, a heart worth gold, hee makes not many suits, but hee comes home, he sues to the purpose,

pose, make thy face (saith hee) to shine upon us; as if he should have said that is prosperity enough, for it endureth for ever.

But what is the presence of God? In a word, it is the particular favour of God which hee expresseth in his Ordinances, it is all the good and sweetnesse that flowes from the purity of Gods worship, whereby God reveales himselfe unto us. It is not gold, wealth, nor prosperity, that makes God to be our God; for there is more gold in the West *Indies*, then in all Christendome, but it is Gods *ordinances* purely administred that brings Gods presence to a people. God forsooke *Shiloh* because his ordinances were not purely kept there; when the people left the Arke (*viz.*) hs pure worship, then God left the people; when the Arke of Gods presence was among them, the word in the purity of it, then his face was there, and there God was principally present; hence it was that *Cain* is said to be cast out of Gods presence; because he was cast out from the Church, hee was cast out from Gods ordinances; if a people doe outwardly reforme, and sincerely worship God they

may remaine, if *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* had but *legally* repented, they had remained, they had not been destroyed; And hence it is that the Saints are so urgent for Gods Ordinances in the *purity* of them: But the wicked say once a Sabbath is enough, and once a week is too much; by this we may see that *England* is ripe; and is shee nor weary of God? nay, shee is fat fed to the slaughter. But it was not so with the Saints and people of God in former times; it was *Davids* grand request, that hee might *dwell* in the house of the Lord, *Psal.* 27. 4. And *Psalme* the 42. and the first verse hee said, his soule did *pant* for Gods ordinances. Thus you see that the Saints of God are marvellous importunate to keepe God in his ordinances.

Quest. But may not a man bee saved without preaching?

Answ. I answer, the argument is clear, the Saints maintain God in his ordinances, the want of which is under the penalty of death and damnation, because wee have more need of God in his ordinances than of all the gold in the world; for all the gold in the world will not satisfy

tisfy a hungry man; It is *bread* that hee must have, because hee hath need of it; so the Saints have most need of *God* and of *Christ*; for though they have but ragged coats, and their bodies pinch't with hunger, yet God is hee that they stand most in need of. In *Psalme* the 37. and the 25. verse *David* fretted at the prosperity of the wicked; but at the *last* he breaks of kindly, saying, *whom have I in heaven but thee?* As if hee should have said, let them have what they will, I will have nothing but thee. And why so? why? *thou art my strength and my portion for ever*; marke, hee saith that God is his strength, yea the strength of his heart, hereby shewing that all the helps in the world cannot help the heart of man, if God and Christ bee wanting; you were as good offer a journey to refresh a weary man, or the ayre to feed a hungry man, as to offer riches, honours and ease to help a distressed soule. These will never help a man, hee may well dote upon them, but his soule and conscience will be galled and troubled still; it must bee the God of peace that must speak peace to troubled soules. It must bee the God

of peace that must speak peace to a distressed soule, to a soule that is damned in it selfe; it is hee that must say, I will bee the strength of their hearts, and their portion for ever; no marvell then if a poor soule cryes to God, when happily the heart is full, when the soul gnaws and cries within it selfe, I am damned, I am damned, happily the palate is pleased with delicates, when the poor soule for ought it knowes must goe down to hell; oh then beloved, if you will have safety, goe where God is, for every good gift comes in with him, if once a man hath got God into his company, hee hath all good things with him. God blessed *Obed-Edoms* house for the Arkes sake, now the Arke was a type of Christ, and where it came, many blessings came with it, even so when God comes unto a people they are married unto him in righteousnesse, in judgement, in loving kindnesse and in mercies for ever, *Hosea* 2. 9. When a man is married to a wife, all is his; so get Christ and all is thine, and then what wouldst thou have more?

God speaks to the *reine*, and it heares; to the *corne*, and it heares; but if thou be

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in Christ, hell and death are thy servants; but they that have outward things only, as profits, pleasures or the like, they have their ruine, unlesse they have Christ with them; get Christ therefore, for if hee be wanting all outward and inward dangers befall that man, or that Nation; woe be unto him or them that are without God. For though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not bee a man left; yea woe also to them, when I doe depart from them; *Ephraim*, as *Tyrus* is planted in a plesant place: but *Ephraim* shall bring forth his children to the murderer, *Hosea* the 9. 12, 13. verses. True indeed, woe bee unto that heart, County or Kingdome, that God is departed from; when God who is the God of mercies and all consolation, is departed away, who can but pitty that soule, County or Kingdome who will not submit to Gods peace consolation and salvation? when God parts, all miseries follow; for that man that makes no conscience in outfaceing God in the Congregation, mark what the text saith *Deut.* 28. 15. I will forsake them, and many miseries shall overtake them, and when the flour gates are

once up, then comes in all evils, And then they shall say, are not these things come upon us because God is not with us? If therfore we would avoid woe and sorrow, slaying and killing one another, if the wife would not see her husband killed before her tender eyes, and the man see his wife snatcht out of the world by the hands of wicked men, then leave not God, but hold him fast, and then evill dayes will depart from us; It is our holding of God that keepes miseries from us; oh then what shall wee think of them that are weary of God, and that say to the Almighty depart from us? *Job* 22. 17.

Ob. But are there any amongst us that are weary of God? I hope there are none such amongst us.

I answer, thou that art a servant, and rejectest the Command of thy Master, in it thou doest reject God, and all such as have a mean conceit of the worship of God and the word of God, and thinke that prayer or preaching is continued too long; I say, these men know not what they thinke or say, but certainly it is because they would be freed from the Ordinances of God: well, God will free thee

thee from them one day, I will warrant thee, and then thou wilt bee in a miſerable condition, oh that thou wouldeſt pitty thy poor condition; but thou that art *weary* of Gods ordinances and of his mercies, his preſence and patience, know thou that thou ſhalt bee deprived of Gods goodneſſe, and thy portion ſhall bee with thoſe that hate God in this life here, and after this life (if thou repent not) thy portion ſhall bee with them in Tophet where the worme dyeth not, and where the fire goeth not out, and then thy crying will not availe, God will bee God over thee in deſtruction, yea when he hath ſpurned thouſands and ten thouſands into hell, ſuch as thou art, then ſhalt thou bee the everlaſting object of his never dying wrath, then notwithſtanding all thy ſhrill cryes, though thou couldeſt be heard out of that dungeon, yet were thy help never the neer; for God is God ſtill. I adviſe thee therefore what to do, whilſt thou art here in this life, make thy peace with God in Chriſt, and lay thy ſelfe low before him, and bear patiently his hand in his wrath which thou haſt deſerved. And marke what I ſay, thou haſt deſerved to bee in hell

hell an hundred times, that is the least; and therefore bee contented with thy condition; for thou hast chosen death rather then life: and God should wrong himselfe and thee also, if he should not let thee have thy choosing.

Will not these things move you, my brethren? Me thinks I see your colours rise, I am glad of it, I hope it is to a good end; you may be wise, and happily so wise as to choose life rather then death: Now the Lord grant it, for he delighteth not in your destruction.

I will adde one word more, to leave the more impression in your hearts; my desire is the health of your soules; though my meat seem sowre, yet my minde is the will of God. Thou man or woman, that canst not abide so much Preaching, but standest upon thorns whilst it is preaching: *Too much of one thing* (you say) *is good for nothing*; You do as much as say you will not have God with you; you will have a little of God, but you will have more of your pleasures: is this your desire, your delights? Know then, whosoever thou art, that hast an ill will to God and his Ordinances, and wilt not have the gospel in the

the purity of it; thou shalt have thy desires: Thou sayest, *depart Preaching*, and so it shall, thou shalt have thy desires. When thou shalt hear the trumpets sound, and when thine eares shall tingle with the sound of war; then depart for ever, you that are weary of God, get you down to hell for ever: Fulfill your base lusts (then will God say) for I have fed you on earth this twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, nay sixty yeares and upwards, and my milde Word could not rule you nor prevail with you, and therefore now get you to hell, and there remain for ever. Think thus with your selves; will God serve me thus? yea that he will, for he hath prepared a place for the proudest Kings, Princes, Monarchs Captains, &c. that are, or ever were in the world, if they will not be ruled nor guided by God, and his word. See *Isa.* 30. 33. the Text doth as good as say, he delighteth to make bonfires about their eares: And must this be the way to glorifie God?

But some may say, *surely Kings and Monarchs are exempted, they need not fear that such torments shall come upon them.*

To this I answer, that God will say unto them, raign there if thou wilt, and then they

they ſhall know that there is a King that laughs at their deſtruction. Take notice of this I beſeech you, and reaſon thus with your own ſoules: Is he a good ſome that cannot abide the preſence of his own father? is ſhe a good wife that cannot abide the company of her husband? and is he a good Chriſtian that cannot endure the company of Chriſt in his ordinances?

This may ſerve to rebuke Gods people for their neglect. You ſee the Goſpel is going, Chriſt is departing, he is going to ſeek better entertainment. (But I marvaile you give no better attendance; I pray hearken what I ſay, and have to ſay, ſtand up and heare, and the Lord give you grace to believe.) I will deale plainly with you; as ſure as God is God, God is going from *England*. Shall *I* tell you what God told me? nay *I* muſt tell you on pain of my life; Will you give eare and believe me? *I* am a poor Ambaſſador ſent from God to do his meſſage unto you; and although *I* be low, yet my meſſage is from above, and He that ſent me is great, and from above; and oh that He would grant that this my meſſage might be believed! What

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if I should tell you, that God told me (yesternight) that he would destroy *England* and lay it waste? What say you to this, my beloved? it is my message, by meditation in Gods word, that he bid me do to you, and he expects an answer from you: I do my message as God commanded me; what sayest thou unto it, *England?* I must return an answer to my Master that sent me, yea this present night I must return an answer, for the Lord hath appointed a set time, saying, *To morrow the Lord will do this thing in the Land,* Exod. 9. 5. Why speak you not? an answer you must give: Do you think well of it? will you have *England* destoyed? will you put the aged to trouble, and your young men to the sword? will you have your your young women widows, and your virgins defiled? will you have your deare and tender little ones tossed upon the pikes and dashed against the stones? or will you have them brought up in Poperie, in idolatrie, under a necessity of perishing their souls for ever, which is worst of all? Will you have these Temples wherein we seeme to worship God, will you have them and your houses burnt with fire, and will you see *England* laid

laid waste without inhabitants? are you well contented it shall be so? I am an importunate suitor for Christ, oh send me not sad away, but speak comfortably and cheerfully, what are you resolved of? Are you willing to enjoy God still, and to have him dwell with you? it is well, *I* am glad of it if it be so; but you must not only say so, but you must use the means, and you must plead importunately with your God: for although his sword be drawn, and in his hand, lifted up and readie to strike; yet suffer him not to destroy, but rather to sheath his sword in the blood of his enemies. *I* would be glad to have *England* flourish still; but if desolation do come, thank your selves for it, it is your own fault if you bee destroyed, and not Gods, for he delights not in the death of any. We may justly take up the complaint of the Prophet *Esay*, who saith, No man stirreth up himselfe to lay hold on God, *Isa.*64.7. But this is our comfort, or rather our misery, that we have quiet prosperitie, with ease and commoditie, our bellies full, our coffers full, and our backs curiouslie clothed, &c. not remembring the afflictions of our neighbour Nations, but all is well

well with us, and it will ſerve our turnes: and if we do humble our ſelves a little, we think it is well. And thus we play mock-holiday with God and with his goſpel, in making it our pack-horſe. Well, look to it, for God is going, and if he do go, then our glorie goes alſo; and then we may ſay with *Phinehas* wife, 1 *Sam.* 4. 22. *Glory is departed from Iſrael*, ſo glory is departed from *England*; for *England* hath ſeen her beſt daies, and the reward of ſin is comming on apace; for God is packing up of his goſpel, becauſe none will buy his wares: God begins to ſhip away his *Noahs*, which propheſied and foretold that deſtruction was neer; and God makes account that *New-England* ſhall be a refuge for his *Noahs* and his *Lots*, a rock and a ſhelter for his righteous ones to run unto; and thoſe that were vexed to ſee the ungodly lives of the people in this wicked Land, ſhall there be ſafe. Oh therefore my brethren, lay hold on God, and let him not go out of your coaſts; look about you I ſay, and ſtop him at the townſ-end, and let not thy God depart, O *England*, lay ſiege about him by humble and heartie cloſing with him; and although he be going,

going, he is dot yet gone; ſuffer him not to goe farr, ſuffer him not to ſay farewell or rather fare ill *England*; therefore becauſe I will doe thus unto thee, prepare to meet the God of *Iſrael* O *England*. Amos 4. 12. Now God calls upon thee, as he did ſometime upon *Jeruſalem* Jer. 6. 8. Bee thou inſtructed therefore O *England*, leaſt my ſoule depart from thee, and leaſt I make thee deſolate like a Land that none inhabiteth; and thus we ſee what the godly have done before us, and now let it bee our Coppie, and let us with *Mary* claſpe cloſe about Chriſt; they have broke the Ice, let us follow them: this is our day of atonement, this preſent day is ours, wee have nothing to doe with tomorrow; wee are at odds with God; and this is the day of our reconciliation; this is the day wherein we are to make our peace with our God; and to end all controverſies, let us labour therfore to prevail with God, and that we may not loſe his preſence, doe as the ſpouſe *Cant.* 3. 1. ſhe ſought him, but ſhe could not find him, yet ſhe gave not over but ſhee followed him till ſhe found him; So our God is going, and ſhall we ſit ſtill? would

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your have the Gospel kept with lazie wishes, Oh no, no, arise, arise from your downy beds, and fall down upon your knees, and intreat God to leave his Gospel to you and to your posteritie; shall wee by our sins disinherit our infants and posteritie of such a blessing which is or should bee the life of there lives? and so have them brought up in superstition? no, no, Lord we cannot abide this, Oh give us neither wealth nor any other blessing but thy Gospell; this is our Plea Lord, and when we have found God, then let us bring him home to our houses, and there retaine him, that so he may be our God and the God of our posterity, in all our and their afflictions; and this will make you to rejoyce exceedingly; Oh my beloved carry God whom with you, and let him be a Father to you and to your posterity.

Quest. But how may wee keep the Lord? it would be worth our labour, for at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Ans. First, wee must be sure to *prepare a room* for him; for he is a King, and a King you know sends his harbinger be-

fore him to prepare a roome for him; saying come out of her my people and touch no unclean thing, and then I will be thy God and thou shalt be my people 2. Cor. 6. 17. so my beloved brethren, come out of all sinfull courses, pleasures, and practises, and you may expect Gods comming unto your houses; And when you sit downe by your fires, or lie downe in your beds, think thus with your selves, what an equall condition doth God propound is, is but only to part with a sin, a lust, a Dalilah, which I may very well spare, as well as I may spare water out of my shooes, or a coale out of my bosome; I say thinke thus with thy selfe and say in thy heart, will God keep Company with mee, if I will not keep Company with sin? are the termes no harder? this is a good offer; I will at once then bid sin adue; for now I am upon another bargaine; here is an offer that I was not aware of; I will quickly dispatch this bargaine and make my peace with my God; and thus if you would have God to bee yours, then let your soules and bodies be his by forsaking all sins; and when you shall call, God will come and say here am I, Esay. 58. 9.

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Secondly, as you must prepare a room for God, so you must *give him content* too, let God have his will, crosse him not. Where the King is, he will have all things to his minde, even so it is with God, If he may have his own worship, you please him wonderous well; you must dresse his dishes according to his tooth; but if you put poyson into his meat, if you mingle the traditions of men with Gods worship, then you *discontent* him. Lay aside therefore all your superstitions, and erronious opinions of God and his worship, and do it according to his *will* in his word *revealed*, and then you please him indeed, when a Nation or a soule submits to God and to his truth in all things. To bow at the name Jesus, is not meant at the *word* Jesus; for so to give him the bow is to commit syllabicall Idolatrie; but the meaning is wee should worship him in spirit and in truth, humbly subjecting our selves unto Christ.

Thirdly, as we must give him his mind, so wee must give him *welcome*; if you displease God and look loweringly or sowerly upon him, and grudge at God or at his truth, no wonder then if God goe away; and surely this is the sinne of *England*,

we bear an ill will unto God and his word, and God hath done well for this Land, and what could hee have done more then hee hath done for this Land, as hee saith of his vineyard? *Esay* 5. 4, 5. but it brought forth contrary fruit; even so wee doe all contrary to Gods expectation; mark therefore what God saith, hee will take away the hedge, and it shall be trodden down, and for ought that may be collected, so it is like to bee with us, if his mercy prevent it not; for, are wee better than the old world? the same sins that were found in the old world, are found in us; *Sodoms* and *Gomorahs* sinnes were but strawes in respect of ours; and yet God rained down fire and brimstone upon them; tell me, are there not as great sinnes amongst us as were in *Jerusalem*, who were carried captives, their city destroyed, and they a vagabond people untill this day? Are we better then other Brethren and neighbour Nations, that have drunk so deeply of Gods wrath? I tell you truly, we are a burden to God, he cannot long beare us, and he will think his burthen well over when he hath destroyed us. You know all men are glad when their *pain* is over;

even so it is with God, we are a pain and a trouble unto him and why should God go continually pained with us, which are worthy to be destroyed? Then shall *England* seek peace, but shall not find it, God shall not pity us: Oh, my beloved brethren, what a pitifull thing it is, when a merciful God shall shew himself unmerciful: when his patience shall be turned into impatience? There is a hard time we long be falling *England*, if God in mercy prevent it not; but we do not consider it, lamentable is our time. Christ wept over Jerusalem; oh (saith he) *that thou hadst known in this thy day of visitation, the things that do concern thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.* Beloved, what do you think we shall do, when Gods mercies are turned into justice? Look to it *England*, the Lord hath wept over thee in mercy many years; What shall we do when we have leisure to consider what once we did enjoy? for Gods patience is never truly prized, till we want it; and then the poor soul will thus say: There was a time when we might have been at peace with this patient God, but now he is hid from our eyes, now the gate is shut, barred and locked up.

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thus when a people doth *abuse* Gods mercy hee sends the contrary judgements, and then it will grieve and wound our soules to think what once wee did enjoy; but that soule that will bid God *welcome* to his heart, may goe *singing* to his grave.

Fourthly, *You must be importunate with God to tarry, and account it a great favour if he will stay*: For God hath roome enough in heaven, and therefore you need not lodge him for want of lodging; but you must be beholding to him to tarry with you (yet in these dayes men doe not love to be beholding;) *Jacob* wrestled with God, and by that meanes he held him till he blessed him: you live under the *meanes*, and know the way, and will you not doe it? what greater condemnation can there be, and how great will your judgement be unto you? more then unto them that have no meanes; and as it was said of *Capernaum*, so say I to *England*, Thou *England* that was lifted up to heaven with *meanes*, shalt be brought down to hel, thou shalt be abused for it; for if the mighty worke which hath been done in thee, had been done in India or Turkie, they would have repented ere this time; And there-

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fore *Capernaums place* is *Englands* place, which is the moſt ſcaldings tormenting place of all, if it repent not; And marke what I ſay, the poore native Turks and Infidels ſhall have a more *coole* ſummer Parlour in hell then *England* ſhall have, for we ſtand upon high rates; therefore thy torment ſhall be the more intollerable to bear.

Now the Lord write theſe things in our hearts by the finger of his holy ſpirit for his Chriſts ſake, under whom I would we were all covered. Amen.

FINIS.

for *Capernums place* is *Englands* place; which is the most scaldings tormenting place of all, if it repent not; And marke what I say, the poore native Turks and Infidels shall have a more *coole* summer Parlour in hell then *England* shall have, for we stand upon high rates; therefore thy torment shall be the more intollerable to bear.

Now the Lord write these things in our hearts by the finger of his holy spirit for his Christs sake, under whom I would we were all covered. Amen.